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Other volumes in preparation

JOHN KNOX

by G. R. PEARCE

Great Lives



DUCKWORTH

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- 1545....Meets George Wishart.
- 1547....Joins rebels in St. Andrews.
- 1547-49 Prisoner in the French galleys.
- 1549....Appointed preacher in Berwick.
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CHAPTER I

1505-1547

Birth and parentage - George Wishart - Knox becomes Reformer - relations between Scotland and England - Cardinal Beaton - assassination in St. Andrews - Knox joins the rebels - appointed preacher - siege and capture of St. Andrews Castle - condemned to the galleys.

OF the second part of John Knox's life, much is known, for the *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, which he wrote at the behest of the Protestants, is to a large extent his autobiography, and is a most detailed one. The story of his first forty years, however, is almost entirely unknown. Even the year of his birth is in doubt, but 1505 is now generally accepted.

He was born near Haddington, the son of a yeoman, William Knox.^{*} Neither of his father nor his mother, who was named Sinclair, does John Knox give any particulars, and, although he may have had several brothers and sisters, there is a record only of an elder brother. Haddington had a burgh school and a Church school, and Knox probably obtained his early education at the former. In 1522, at the age of seventeen, he became a student at Glasgow University under John Major, a scholar with a Continental reputation

and the most famous teacher of his day in Scotland. It is known that Knox took orders and acted as a notary under the authority of the Church, but from 1522 to 1545 his career is practically a total blank. We do not know how he conducted himself as a priest, or whether he was attracted by the doctrines of the Reformed Church long before he came out into the open as the bitter opponent of Rome. A papist chronicler affirms that Knox was a man of scandalous life, notorious for his immoral practices, his relations with loose women, and his unnatural lusts. Little credence can, however, be placed on the unconfirmed assertion of a man who was not only on the opposite side in religion, but had a personal antagonism towards Knox.

A great deal has been written in support of different theories regarding the early years of John Knox, and the whole-hearted vigour with which the arguments have been conducted would have pleased him as a lover of lively disputation. But most of the points in dispute would have seemed to Knox of absolutely no importance. He himself apparently considered the first part of his career of so little interest that, among the mass of autobiographical material that he left, he makes not a single reference to it. His life, he must have felt, began only when he had found the true religion ; the forty years that he had passed in darkness were unworthy of the merest mention.

Knox declared himself an adherent of the reformed religion at the end of 1545. Sixteen years before, the first Lutheran had been burned in Scotland for heresy ; other preachers had taken up his work and had taught the reformed religion – some of them followed him to the stake ; Protestant books, although banned, had been imported into the country and widely circulated. But it was not until after 1540 that the reformed religion began to make any appreciable number of converts in Scotland.

Henry VIII, for purposes of his own, had set the pope at defiance in 1534, and separated the English Church from the Papal See. That crisis in the Church of England, however, had no effect upon the ecclesiastical power in Scotland. England had long been Scotland's most hated foe ; in 1513, the English had humbled their northern neighbour at Flodden, and James IV of Scotland had fallen on the field. The Duke of Albany, who was appointed regent for the new king, James V, would enter into no alliance with England. Under his successor in the regency, the Earl of Angus, the prestige of the crown, rarely very high and never very permanent in Scotland, declined considerably, and the nobles ruled almost as independent princes. James V, who had been kept under restraint by Angus, escaped from the hands of the regent and, incensed against the arrogant aristocracy, chose his advisers from

among the ecclesiastics. These ecclesiastics showed themselves bitter opponents of the Lutheran doctrines.

James was urged by Henry VIII to follow the English example in reforming the Church, but he was married first to the daughter of the King of France and later of the Duke of Guise, and he looked on Catholic France as his ally. Henry declared war against Scotland in 1542, and James led out an army to meet the English troops. Reports came that the enemy had withdrawn, and the Scottish nobles took the opportunity to show their independence of a king who relied so largely upon ecclesiastical counsels. They refused to follow him, and James was forced to retire. Later in the year, a Scots army was dispatched to the south, but just before the English territory was reached, a quarrel broke out among the Scots. Up to that time the nobles had been unaware that the king had appointed one of his favourites to the command. The news caused the deepest resentment. A detachment of English cavalry, some three hundred strong, suddenly charged the Scottish army while the question of leadership was being disputed, and the Scots fled in panic at Solway Moss.

The disaster broke the heart of James V, who died at the end of 1542, leaving the nine-day-old Mary Stuart as Queen of Scots. Henry VIII demanded to be acknowledged as Lord Superior

of Scotland, but the clergy, on religious grounds, and the people, on national grounds, were opposed to the English pretensions. Two years later, therefore, Henry sent the Earl of Hertford to invade Scotland, instructing him to "put all to fire and sword, to burn Edinburgh town, to raze and deface it, when you have sacked it, and got what you can of it . . . putting man, woman and child to fire and sword without exception, when any resistance shall be made against you." The routes of Hertford's two descents into Scotland were marked by a trail of burned abbeys and monasteries.

This terrible punishment added to the bitterness that had always existed against England. Anything that savoured of England was condemned, and since the reformed religion had been adopted by the English it was suspect to the Scots. Cardinal Beaton, Archbishop of St. Andrews and the ruler of the country, played cleverly on the anti-English feeling to cement the French alliance and stamp out the new religious doctrine. Under his régime, however, the great positions of State were filled by ecclesiastics, and thus the cardinal raised up against himself the Scots nobles, who felt that the government should be entrusted to them. Hatred of Beaton was the strongest feeling of the Scots aristocracy, and, although little interested in any religion and unsympathetic towards England, some of them threw in their lot with

the Reformers and entered into correspondence with the English king.

It was a group of such nobles who invited to East Lothian the man with whom is associated the conversion of John Knox. George Wishart had fled from Scotland, in 1538, to escape prosecution as a heretic. He studied in England, consulted some of the principal Reformers on the Continent, and returned to his native country as a preacher of the new movement six or seven years later. He soon made a reputation by his uncompromising denunciation of the Catholics, and at the end of 1545 was asked to pursue his work in East Lothian. John Knox was at the time acting as tutor to three boys, and living in Longniddry House, the property of one of the aristocrats who had sent the invitation to Wishart. By what steps he reached the conviction that he must break away from that Church in which he had served for twenty years remains unknown. He may have pondered the Reformist doctrines before Wishart arrived, but, more probably, the eloquent preacher was the first to point the way to him. For Wishart he had a high regard – “a man of such graces,” he writes, “as before him were never heard within this realm, aye, and are rare to find in any man.”

Once he had decided to embrace the reformed religion, Knox lost no time in playing a public part. A papist had attempted to kill Wishart at

Dundee, and, since the attack, the preacher had been preceded on his journeyings by an adherent who carried a double-handed sword. Knox was appointed to be the sword-bearer for Wishart in East Lothian. There was some risk attached to the office, for Wishart was a marked man, and Cardinal Beaton was determined to seize so dangerous a critic of Rome. On the 16th of January, 1546, the cardinal pounced. If Knox had had his way, he would have been with Wishart at the time. The preacher, after delivering a sermon in Haddington, set out for Ormiston, a few miles distant. He guessed the fate in store for him, and refused to allow Knox to come farther than the outskirts of Haddington. "Return to your bairns [pupils], and God bless you," he said. "One is enough for a sacrifice." That night Wishart was arrested by the Earl of Bothwell, and a month later was condemned to the flames.

The position of Knox was now difficult. He had become known as a Reformer and the associate of one of the most successful preachers of the new doctrines, and he might expect measures to be taken against him by the Government. The fathers of his three pupils were themselves numbered among the Reformers, but they had been unable to save Wishart, and could hardly be relied upon to protect Knox if the authorities took action. Beaton, however, was

apparently satisfied with having cut off the master, and there seems to have been no attempt to interfere with Knox.

But a few weeks after the execution of Wishart the situation changed. A number of Scots nobles, some of them hoping for religious tolerance, but most of them more interested in the political advantages to be expected from the removal of Beaton, resolved upon the assassination of the cardinal—a plot in which they were supported by Henry of England. At the end of May two of the conspirators made a pretext for gaining access to the castle of St. Andrews, where Beaton was in residence. The guard was killed, a strong body of men swarmed into the castle, and the cardinal was stabbed to death. His body was hung from the ramparts of his castle and then burned.

Both those who had looked for political advantage and those who had hoped for religious freedom seemed likely to be disappointed. There was little condemnation of the deed—assassination was not uncommon, and Beaton had never been popular—but the people did not rise in support of the rebels. Arran, the regent of Scotland, set out to punish those who were responsible for the murder, and he showed no inclination to make any concessions to the nobles who demanded a share in the government. As for the Church, its direction was handed over to Arran's illegitimate brother, John Hamilton.* While Arran besieged

the rebels in St. Andrews Castle, John Hamilton tightened up the prosecution of the adherents of the reformed religion.

John Knox, who had so far escaped the attention of the authorities, felt himself in acute danger under the new heresy hunt organised by Archbishop Hamilton. He proposed to flee from Scotland. It would have been comparatively easy to slip over the border into England and find refuge there. In England, Henry VIII had divorced the Church from the papacy, but Knox thought that the new order was little improvement upon the old. Many of the superstitions and ceremonies to which he objected had not been removed, and he turned his eyes to Germany, where the principles enunciated by Martin Luther had been largely adopted.

But for the present Knox was not to leave Scotland. The fathers of his pupils protested when he mentioned his plans for flight, and pressed him to stay. Were their sons to be deprived of Knox's services? they asked. Knox appeared to think it not unreasonable that he should be urged to hazard his liberty, and perhaps his life, in order that his pupils should not miss the advantage of his tuition. For nearly a year, therefore, he remained in the vicinity of Haddington, though whether he took any active part in spreading the new religion cannot be determined. During this time he was apparently not troubled by the

authorities, but in the spring of 1547 his old fears of arrest returned. His patrons maintained their opposition to his departure from Scotland. Their solution was that Knox should enter St. Andrews Castle. They appeared to attach great importance to the retention of his services as tutor, and were agreed that their sons should accompany him to St. Andrews.

In April 1547 Knox and his three pupils joined the rebels in the castle. The assassins of Beaton had been supported by about 150 men, and had held the forces of the regent, Arran, at bay for several months. Arran's siege had, however, been a half-hearted affair ; the castle of St. Andrews was formidable, and his army was weak and undependable. In December 1546, therefore, the rebels and the regent had come to an agreement by which hostilities were to cease for the present. The pope had been asked to issue an absolution for the murder of Beaton, and the truce was to remain in force until he replied. Neither side, however, was really much concerned about the absolution – when it did come, the rebels objected to its wording, and refused to accept its terms. Arran's purpose in granting the truce was to obtain reinforcements from France, while the rebels hoped that Henry of England, with whom they were in close touch, would dispatch an army to swell their numbers. The truce was in operation when Knox joined the rebels at St. Andrews, and

there was no bar to communication between town and castle.

Knox had no part in the murder of Cardinal Beaton, but he looked upon his removal as a godly act. If he expected the rebels to be of upright character and high moral standards – and he and those of his time saw nothing strange in demanding such qualities from bloody-handed assassins – he was disappointed. A few Reformers were of strict piety ; the remainder were mostly irreligious men, greedy and self-seeking, of corrupt life and immoral habits. In the beginning, Knox devoted himself exclusively to his duty as a tutor, and made no effort to play a prominent part among the rebels. But he examined his charges in public, and his eloquence and his talents as a teacher attracted attention. He was soon asked to help in the dialectical struggle between the Reformers and the Roman Catholics. Rough, the reformed minister of the castle, was at a disadvantage when matched against the trained theological disputants of the university, and he turned to Knox for guidance. Such assistance was willingly given, but Knox hesitated to accept the position of preacher to the Reformers in the castle, as he was pressed to do. Rough, however, rose in the pulpit one day, and, speaking directly to Knox, said, “ ‘ Brother, ye shall not be offended albeit that I speak unto you that which I have in charge, even from all those that are here present

which is this. . . . I charge you that . . . you take upon you the public office and charge of preaching, even as you look to avoid God's heavy displeasure, and desire that He shall multiply His graces with you.' " Rough enquired of the congregation, " ' Was not this your charge to me ? And do ye not approve this vocation ? ' They answered, ' It was ; and we approve it. ' " Knox, who relates this incident in his *History*, goes on, " Whereat the said John, abashed, burst forth in most abundant tears, and withdrew himself to his chamber. His countenance and behaviour, from that day to that he was compelled to present himself to the public place of preaching, did sufficiently declare the grief and trouble of his heart ; for no man saw any sign of mirth in him, neither yet had he pleasure to accompany any man, many days together."

The acceptance of the preachership was, Knox knew, a dangerous thing for himself. He appears to have had no illusion about the failure of the rebels to hold St. Andrews. Henry of England had certainly promised to succour the garrison, but the French were more likely to send assistance to Regent Arran before the English reached Scotland. Knox, however, carried out his duties with great energy, and never seems to have considered his own interests. His first sermon was a sweeping attack upon the pope, whom he identified as the Man of Sin, and the Roman Catholic

Church as the Whore of Babylon. The sermon attracted great attention, and fears were expressed for the preacher's safety. The sub-prior of St. Andrews was rebuked by his superior for permitting such doctrines to be expounded, and it was arranged that a debate should take place between Knox and one of the champions of the university. The contest was a very one-sided affair ; for, due more to the incompetency of the Catholic representative than to Knox's skill, the reforming preacher easily won the battle. Since that plan to silence Knox had failed, the sub-prior had the pulpit of the church occupied every Sunday by a Roman preacher. Knox thereupon confined his preaching to weekdays. Large audiences came to hear him, and several converts were made among the townspeople.

Knox went from strength to strength as a preacher in the town. In the castle, his influence also grew rapidly, and he imposed religious discipline upon the dissolute band of rebels. But his triumph was short-lived. In June 1547 a fleet of 21 French galleys, under Leo Strozzi, sailed against St. Andrews. At the same time the regent, Arran, renewed his attack from the land side, and the rebels were compelled to surrender after a few weeks. The French undertook to transport the rebels to France, and allow any who wished to go elsewhere to do so, provided that they did not return to Scotland. At the beginning

of August the French ships set out for France with 120 members of the garrison on board.

The generous terms promised by the victors were not kept. Aristocrats were shut up in prisons ; the commoners, including Knox, were sent to the galleys as slaves.

CHAPTER II

1547-1554

Knox in the galleys – independence of spirit – release – sent to Berwick – Mrs. Bowes and Marjory Bowes – Knox appointed preacher to the king – opposition to Cranmer – the Second Prayer Book – summoned before Privy Council – accession of Mary Tudor – Lady Jane Grey – persecution of the Protestants.

KNOX had been fearless in proclaiming his message in Scotland, and he was no less bold in testifying while in the galleys. When an image of the Virgin Mary was brought to him on board ship, he scoffed at it as a painted piece of wood, and, casting it into the sea, he remarked, "Let our Lady now save herself; she is light enough; let her learn to swim." Of his nineteen months in the galleys, however, little is known, for Knox refused to speak of the hardships he experienced. His captivity seemed to harden his resolution and strengthen his belief that he had been called to perform a high office. He felt that God "hath made my tongue a trumpet, to forewarn realms and nations," and he was sure that great work lay before him.

Twice his galley anchored within sight of Scotland, and once he saw the spire of that church in St. Andrews in which he had confounded his

attackers. Others may have been overcome with the sadness of their position, but Knox declares that he prophesied that his voice would yet ring out from that pulpit. His constitution, never very strong, was undermined by the rigours of the galleys, and he was frequently ill. At no time, however, did he doubt that he would yet conquer, and no privation could break his independent spirit.

The slaves in the galleys were chained to benches which ran lengthwise along the ship. During the day, an overseer kept order by means of a whip ; at night the slaves slept under the benches, in all seasons and in all weathers. Knox found the time and opportunity to write a long letter of advice to the congregation of St. Andrews, and to summarise a treatise on "Justification," which he strongly recommended to the faithful. Such work could hardly have been performed in the conditions under which galley slaves are usually represented as living, and it seems probable that Knox received special treatment for at least part of his captivity.

That captivity came to an end in the spring of 1549. Probably as a result of representations from England, all the prisoners taken at St. Andrews were released, and Knox and most of the others were dispatched to England. Henry VIII had died in 1547 (January 28), and Edward VI had ascended the throne. Edward was only

eleven years of age, and a council of sixteen had been appointed by Henry to rule during the new king's minority. Hertford, who now became Duke of Somerset, was chosen to be the Protector of the Realm. The young king was a Protestant, and Somerset, though a man of dissolute life, put himself at the head of the reformed religion. The late king had intended to do little more than break the power of the pope in England, and although, in his last years, he had revised some of the ceremonies of the Catholics, he had retained the organisation of the Roman Church. Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, meant to bring about a much greater reformation, and was supported by the Protector Somerset – and by Edward VI, who, young as he was, took a keen interest in religious matters. There was considerable antagonism to the new measures. The monasteries had been swollen with wealth, the bishops arrogant, the priests corrupt, but the people's position had not been improved by the transfer of the riches of the clergy to the nobles. Although, therefore, the towns, which lost nothing by the fall of the monasteries, supported the Reformation, the country districts were opposed to the archbishop's measures.

Cranmer, however, carried through those measures. He abolished services in Latin, and issued the First Book of Common Prayer, which does not differ much from the prayer-book in

use in the Church of England to-day. Commissioners were appointed to see that the archbishop's orders were complied with, but many of the clergy refused to conduct their services according to the new prayer-book. It was then laid down that no preacher must preach without a licence from the king, Somerset, or Cranmer.

Such was the position in England when Knox landed from France. He could not return to Scotland, for the persecution of the Protestants was still fierce in that country. Two years previously the Scots had been beaten by the English at Pinkie, but had since received large reinforcements, and were now more than holding their own. Before the end of the next year, they had recovered most of their lost territory. With the departure of the English, the heresy hunt became even more vigorous in Scotland, and one man at least was burned, for reading the Bible, a few months after Knox's release. A judge at the trial remarked that if everyone was to be allowed to read the Bible there would be nothing left for the clergy to do !

Knox had refused to live in England during the reign of Henry VIII, since he did not regard the English Church as "pure." Now that Cranmer's hand had removed many of the grosser abuses, however, he was prepared to labour in England, and for the next five years he never left that country. A licence was soon granted to him,

and he was appointed to Berwick, which had been won by the English from the Scots. It was an appropriate charge for Knox. Many of the people were Scotch, and Knox felt at home among them ; Berwick was even more licentious than most garrison towns, and Knox was never happier or more successful than when faced with a highly unruly flock. He brought order into Berwick. Crimes of violence were reduced in number, the moral standard was raised, and Knox was quickly surrounded by a large and enthusiastic congregation which gladly submitted to his iron rule.

He is often thought of as tall, an impression probably due to his long beard, and as having a loud and booming voice. Actually, however, he was slightly less than medium height, and his voice was never strong. But he could magnetise any audience, and few could listen unmoved to the flood of prophecies and denunciations which poured from his lips. He had the gift of words, and he knew human nature. He possessed a native shrewdness and an aptitude for twisting biblical prophecies and allusions to suit his purpose. To him religion was not a part of life, it was the whole of life. To his audiences he made God real – nearly always terribly real.

Knox was now forty-five. He had never, so far as we know, considered marriage in the five years since he had left the Church of Rome, but

at Berwick he met the woman who was to be his first wife. A few miles from the town lived Mrs. Bowes, the wife of Richard Bowes, keeper of Norham Castle. She was a woman of about fifty, the mother of ten daughters and five sons. Knox wanted to marry Marjory, the fifth daughter, but he seems to have had more in common with the mother. Mrs. Bowes poured out her heart to the powerful preacher, and he welcomed her long and wandering effusions. The correspondence, which has been preserved, shows her to have been a woman of a morbid turn of mind. She confessed her religious fears to Knox, and he, strangely enough, appears to have been astonished at their nature. For those doubts were for the most part doubts that he had experienced, and that he had thought temptings of the Devil confined to himself alone. His replies give the impression of being statements of his own position for his own satisfaction as much as for her comfort. Mrs. Bowes relied upon the correspondence so much that, when she could not think of a real sin, she invented one for the occasion, drawing forth from Knox the stern rebuke that it was as wicked to exaggerate as to gloss over one's failings. Mrs. Bowes was only one of the women who were to flutter round Knox ; he never lacked a circle of admiring women, the most important of whom, next to Mrs. Bowes, was Mrs. Locke, the wife of a rich London merchant.

His work in Berwick had attracted attention, and when it was decided to appoint six preachers to the young king, Knox was chosen for one of the posts, which carried with it a salary of forty pounds a year. He was not allowed to remain in Berwick. At the beginning of 1551 he received a charge in Newcastle, where he does not seem to have been so happy as in Berwick. He was beset with fears for the future. King Edward was a sickly youth whom no one expected to live long. His death would mean the accession to the throne of Mary, daughter of Catherine of Arragon. Mary was a staunch Catholic, and the Protestants could look for no tolerance from her.

There were more immediate troubles. The Protector Somerset had fallen from power in 1549 – he was beheaded two years later – and the Earl of Northumberland now ruled the country. Knox had no love for Somerset, but he had less for Northumberland. The two had already come into collision, and Northumberland had referred to the preacher as “neither grateful nor pleasurable.” Then there came a clash with Archbishop Cranmer in the autumn of 1552. Cranmer had submitted the Second Prayer Book to the king and Privy Council, and had obtained their approval. Knox and a number of other preachers objected to several of its provisions, and, in particular, to the injunction that communicants should kneel when receiving the bread and wine.

That to Knox savoured of idolatry, and he was loud in its condemnation. When, as one of the king's preachers, he delivered a sermon before the Court, he denounced the practice of kneeling, in his usual sweeping terms, and appealed in the name of God for a revision of the book. It was a point on which he felt very keenly. While at Berwick, he had insisted that his congregation should sit and not kneel at communion, and he had defied Cranmer's instructions on the matter.

It appeared, however, that Cranmer was to win on this occasion. He had already obtained approval for his work, and Knox's protest before the king was made only shortly before the time fixed for the issue of the new prayer-book. Knox, nevertheless, worked up a considerable agitation in the few days that remained. In his view the Church must follow the Bible absolutely. Not only must nothing be omitted, but nothing must be added. Apart from the danger that communicants might be led to imagine that the bread and wine were actually Christ's body, he objected to kneeling—on the ground that no scriptural authority existed for such an attitude at the communion table. The opposition of which he was so prominent a member failed in its object of revising the injunction, but the Council was moved to add that "the sacramental bread and wine . . . may not be adored, for that were idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful

Christians." It is a clause that still remains in the prayer-book, and one that has in our own day caused a storm in Parliament.

Knox was not satisfied with this partial victory. He was a man who could never compromise ; to him there was no middle course – either a thing was right or it was wrong ; and he was certain that his view was the correct one. He continued to make his congregation sit at communion, and defied the authorities. He had come into prominence for his defiance in other matters, and now, in the spring of 1553, he was summoned to appear before the Privy Council to answer for his conduct. He had rejected promotion in the Church – some time previously he had refused a bishopric, and a few months before he had refused the charge of All Hallows, London. The Council asked him the reason for his rejection of All Hallows. Knox replied that his conscience assured him that he was more useful elsewhere, and that consequently he could not undertake a London charge. Then the Council, with a recollection of his frequent criticisms of the ceremonies of the Church, asked bluntly whether he considered that no Christian could accept the ritual laid down by English law. To this Knox returned that the Church of England was not perfect, and that many things needed reforming before anyone could serve God faithfully as a minister ; he instanced that ministers had no

power to withhold the sacrament of communion from those who in their opinion were unworthy to partake of it. The third and last question was : Did not Knox think it indifferent whether communicants knelt or not ? Knox could not admit that anything at all was indifferent where God's service was concerned, and he abominated kneeling. He replied that Christ was perfect, and that His example was to sit, not to kneel.

The enquiry was a triumph for Knox. He had dealt cleverly with the questions, and, while not departing from his own viewpoint, had left his inquisitors not a single opening for further action against him. He was dismissed with the pious hope that he would learn to accommodate himself, and Knox was well pleased with the outcome of an appearance of the result of which he had been doubtful. His position as preacher to the king was not affected, and shortly afterwards he delivered a sermon as a Court preacher. He did not return to Newcastle after this duty, but started on a preaching tour in Buckinghamshire, where he remained for the next two months.

His refusal of promotion in the Church had been due to " foresight of troubles to come," and he had not long to wait for the catastrophe which he feared. Edward VI died, at the beginning of July 1553, at the age of seventeen. He had been deeply grieved at the thought of the accession of Mary Tudor to the throne, since a Catholic

reaction was bound to take place under her rule. Henry VIII had in his lifetime regulated the succession, first to Edward VI and then to Mary, and Edward had resolved to follow this example. He willed the kingdom to Lady Jane Grey. Henry VIII had, however, taken power to lay down the succession, whereas Edward VI had no parliamentary authority to name his successor.

But Lady Jane Grey had a powerful supporter. Her husband was Northumberland's son, and Northumberland set himself up as her champion. The only hope of Lady Jane Grey and Northumberland was to appeal to the Protestants against the Catholic Mary. Knox was deeply anxious regarding the consequences of Mary's accession to the throne, but he distrusted Northumberland, and he would not raise his voice on behalf of that ambitious schemer. Northumberland's plans failed entirely. The people supported Mary Tudor, his army deserted, and Northumberland acknowledged Mary as his sovereign. She lost no time in having him beheaded.

Mary was now queen, and her view of the Reformation was in no doubt. Knox came up from the country, and watched sadly while London celebrated the coronation of the sovereign who was to be known as Bloody Mary. The queen attended the services according to the Roman Church, but was at first content only to adopt mild measures to encourage her subjects to desert

the reformed religion. For a time she offered religious tolerance, but within a few months she had begun her persecution of the Reformers and had seized Cranmer and Latimer.

Both Protestant and Catholic preachers were invited to apply for licences in the early days of Mary's reign, but Knox did not dare to make application. He was marked out by having been one of the late king's six preachers ; he had never mixed his words in speaking of Mary ; and he had a reputation as being among the most bitter opponents of Catholicism. Although the danger was acute, however, he did not give up his preaching. He undertook several tours in the country, and delivered sermons even in London. When the heresy hunt was pursued more vigorously in the capital, he returned to Newcastle. Although among the people to whom he had ministered, he still felt unsafe in Newcastle. He was urged to follow the example of other Protestants and flee to the Continent, but Knox hesitated to leave England. It seemed cowardice to flee when other preachers were nobly carrying on the work at the risk of life and liberty.

With the accession of the new ruler, his hopes of winning Marjory Bowes for his wife seemed to have disappeared. She and her mother were staunch Protestants, but her father had never been enthusiastic for the reformed religion. When Knox presented himself to Sir Robert Bowes,

apparently the head of the family, to plead for Marjory's hand, he was dismissed contemptuously. "Away with your rhetorical reasons," said Sir Robert, "for I will not be persuaded." "God knows," writes Knox sadly, "I did use no rhetoric or coloured speech. . . . I am not a good orator in my own cause."

For five years he had laboured in England. He had been in comfortable financial circumstances, had built up faithful congregations, had preached before the Court, and been consulted by the rulers of the Church on ecclesiastical measures. Now, broken in health and in his forty-ninth year, he had neither income nor position. He shrank from facing life in a new country, and not until the end of February 1554, eight months after Mary Tudor came to the throne, could he bring himself to cut adrift from England.

CHAPTER III

1554-1555

At Dieppe – prophetic thunderings – meeting with Calvin – appointed preacher at Frankfort – religious wranglings – expelled by the magistrates – Geneva – return to Berwick – marriage to Marjory Bowes – in Scotland – venality of the Church – jealousy of the nobles – policy of Mary of Guise – the progress of the Reformers.

Knox sailed to Dieppe. He had no sooner set foot on the Continent than he began to regret his flight. What others would think of him was a matter of no importance – Knox never troubled about anyone else's opinion. It was before his own conscience that he had to stand trial. He could not explain to his own satisfaction why he had run away, but he was certain that "the fear of death was not the chief cause of my fleeing." But that it should have affected his conduct at all wounded him grievously. "I have, in the beginning of this battle, appeared to play the faint-hearted and feeble soldier (the cause I remit to God)," he wrote humbly, "yet my prayer is, that I may be restored to battle again."

There existed no doubt in his own mind that the reformed religion was the only one pleasing unto God, and that the Roman Church was an offence to the Creator. Why, then, had God allowed the

Catholics to triumph and permitted the Protestants to be subjected to persecution? Knox had a ready explanation – God wanted to test the Reformers, and this test had been rendered necessary because of their sins. He did not spare himself when he considered his own deficiencies. No one could have been more faithful in service, but Knox was ashamed that he had not accomplished more. He mourned the time spent in worldly business and “in bodily recreation and exercise.” And if, as he held, the accession of a Catholic sovereign had been permitted so that the Protestants should be tested, it was essential that the Protestants should cling firmly to their religion and prove their faith in their Maker. Knox did not intend that there should be any backsliding if he could prevent it. A few days after his arrival in Dieppe, he addressed, to the congregations that he had served, *A Godly Letter of Warning to the Faithful*, in which he appealed to them to let nothing wean them from the true religion, and pointed out the fate in store for those who weakened.

That duty done, Knox went through France to Switzerland, but he returned to Dieppe after a few weeks.. He felt that the Protestants in England needed further encouragement – or further threats – and at the beginning of May he dispatched another letter, and followed it with a third at the end of the month. These later letters

indicate how Knox's mind was tending. He had never countenanced revolution against the established authority of the State, but now he began to suggest that occasions might arise when the people would be justified in rising against their ruler. He had been perplexed by the question of the duty of a subject to those set in authority over him, and, soon after his arrival, he had consulted Calvin in Geneva and Bullinger in Zürich – the two most notable Protestant leaders on the Continent. Kings were regarded as ruling by divine right; but, asked Knox, did a minor rule by divine right? Did a woman rule by divine right, and, if so, could she transfer her powers to her husband? Again, how should godly persons act if the nobles, in the cause of true religion, rose against a sovereign who was an idolater – and by idolater he meant an adherent of the Roman Catholic Church. Calvin would not commit his opinion to paper, but Bullinger made a written statement in reply to the questions. The statement, however, was worded in such vague terms that several interpretations were possible, and Knox felt highly dissatisfied. He appears to have hoped that Calvin and Bullinger would pronounce definitely that God's people were justified in rebelling against a ruler on grounds of religion.

The three pamphlets that Knox had dispatched from Dieppe had met with a disappointing

reception in England. The persecution of the Protestants had not yet reached its highest point, but the measures against them had become more severe, and many of the Reformers had forsworn their religion as the only way of saving their lives and property. Knox was moved to fury. It seemed to him that the Protestants would be judged according to their behaviour in this time of trial ; if they were feeble in their faith, then God would account them unworthy and would refrain from setting up a Protestant England. Something stronger from his pen was needed to keep the Protestants true to their religion, Knox felt, and at the end of July he issued from Dieppe his fourth epistle : *A Faithful Admonition unto the Professors of God's Truth in England*.

This letter did not pass unnoticed as its three predecessors had done. Two editions were called for, and the *Faithful Admonition* produced a considerable effect in England. Knox was stern in his denunciation of those Protestants who had wavered, and he painted a terrible picture of the fate reserved for those backsliders. But he did not confine himself to warnings to the Protestants and to remarks which were liable to be construed as invitations to rebellion. He assailed the English Catholics in the most unmeasured terms, and foretold an awful retribution upon them. It was a vicious piece of work, and the attack upon Queen Mary was particularly violent and abusive.

Knox has been criticised for issuing such a pamphlet at such a time. It is charged against him that he hid in safety in Dieppe, that he showed no understanding of the difficulties of those who were under Queen Mary's immediate rule, and that his outburst stirred the Catholics to tighten up the persecution of the Protestants. The pamphlet cannot be defended ; it is a discreditable piece of wild raving, and its distribution in England may have led to a fresh drive against the Reformers. Some critics, however, have gone further and accused Knox of deliberately sacrificing the Protestants in order that he might give vent to his own spleen. This, however, is to misunderstand Knox's character. He looked upon himself as a man called by God to lead the people to the true religion and to fight the anti-christ, the pope, and he never calculated the effect when he had the urge to proclaim his views – views for which he felt himself to be God's trumpeter. The prophet of Knox's type does not think of the consequences either to himself or others. There is the command to speak, to write, to do, and the command must be obeyed unquestioningly. Knox may rightly be blamed for thinking that God had ordered him to produce so arrogant and ill-tempered a pamphlet, but he did think so, and he neither could nor would refuse what he believed to be a command from heaven.

Having shot this disastrous bolt, he returned in

August to Geneva, where Calvin received him warmly. Knox had recently lamented the gaps in his education, especially his slight knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, and he set himself to the study of these languages. After two months at Geneva, however, he was invited to become one of the preachers to the English Protestants in Frankfort. The situation in that town was complicated. Most of the people were Lutherans, but a contingent of French Reformers had settled in Frankfort, and they worshipped according to the Calvinist doctrine. In July, a band of English Protestants, who had fled from their country on the accession of Mary Tudor, came to Frankfort. The French Calvinists had been allotted a church in the town, and were willing to share it with the English. The French insisted that the new-comers should use the Calvinist form of service, and most of the English Protestants were agreeable.

Knox loved to preach, but he hesitated to accept the invitation to preach in Frankfort the "most lively word of God, according to the gift that God hath given you." He asked the advice of Calvin, and Calvin urged him to undertake the work. Knox, however, was unwilling to leave Geneva and his studies. The Frankfort Protestants had written : "We mistrust not but that you will joyfully accept this calling." Not until November did Knox make up his mind to go, and then he went anything but joyfully.

At Frankfort he found confusion. The English Protestants had invited other refugees to join them in the town, but had omitted to mention that the English service was not being used. When the real position was discovered, the English in Frankfort were severely censured for departing from the prayer-book issued in the reign of Edward VI. Some of the congregation pressed for the English service to be adopted, and the Church was divided into two warring factions. Knox does not often appear in the rôle of a peace-maker, but on this occasion he acted as one. He had never been impressed by the prayer-book, and, since meeting Calvin and studying at Geneva, he had liked it less. The majority of the Protestants in Frankfort favoured the Calvinist form of service, but Knox would not permit it to be used until the English Protestants in other Continental towns had been consulted. His aim was to find a compromise, and he compiled a form of service on which he sought Calvin's advice. Calvin approved it, and criticised those who still clung to the English prayer-book, a book which seemed to him to be ridden with Catholic superstitions.

Knox was prepared to make concessions to those who adhered to the English service, and although most of the congregation again urged him to bring the form approved by Calvin into use, he preferred to draw up another service in

which a larger part of the English prayer-book was retained. This was accepted by both parties, and they agreed that it should remain in force until April 1555. Calvin, Bullinger, and three others were to be the arbitrators if any doubt arose in regard to interpretation.

The agreement, however, was not honoured. The prayer-book party pressed for the inclusion of further parts of the English service, and pointed out that they had fled from their country to worship according to their consciences. The Calvinist party replied that Protestants should set an example of unity and fellowship, and that the parts of the prayer-book which had been omitted were unimportant. The prayer-book party thereupon retorted that men and women were dying in England because they insisted upon using the prayer-book, and that any departure from it was in effect to condemn those martyrs.

About a month before the agreement was due to expire, a further band of English Protestants sought refuge in Frankfort. Their leader was Cox, a man of learning and energy, and a fighter to the last ditch. On the first Sunday morning after their arrival, Cox and his party attended the church and used the English service. In the afternoon Knox delivered a sermon in which he appealed for order among men who were equally cut off from their native land, and all of whom had made sacrifices for their religion. He did

not, however, stop at that. He addressed a few biting words to those who supported certain practices of the English Church – practices which Cox and others of his party favoured.

The result was an uproar. Cox and the other new-comers had not yet been accepted into the Church, and had therefore no voice in its administration. If they were admitted, their votes would make it possible for the prayer-book party to dominate the congregation. The Calvinists at present had the majority, and they wanted to use it to exclude Cox and his party from membership. John Knox would not agree. He urged that the new-comers should be admitted, and the Calvinists reluctantly followed their preacher's advice.

No sooner had the new-comers been accepted into membership than they used their power to dismiss Knox, the man who was responsible for their admission. Knox was forbidden to preach, and when he appeared in the church as an ordinary member of the congregation the Cox party marched out rather than sit in the same place as him. The magistrates of Frankfort intervened in the dispute, and warned the congregation that if the English form of service were used the church would be closed. Some of the prayer-book party, perhaps thinking that Knox was responsible for this interference, and that his removal would mean a more lenient attitude on

the part of the authorities, now adopted a detestable measure. They went in secret to the magistrates of the town and accused Knox of spreading seditious doctrines. It was easy to prove from Knox's writings that he had attacked not only the Queen of England but the Emperor of Germany and the King of France – the Emperor he had called “no less an enemy to Christ than ever was Nero.” The authorities did not wish to arrest Knox, but they could not risk harbouring a man who had taught seditious doctrines. A message was sent to him that he would be well advised to leave the town at once.

Knox returned, at the end of May, to Geneva, his spiritual home. He had not been anxious to accept the position in Frankfort, and was not sorry to get away from the bickerings of the contentious congregation, but he resented the treatment that he had received. He had acted generously to his opponents, and had been repaid with rank betrayal. Calvin, who had urged Knox to accept the appointment, felt responsible, and tried to smooth the Scotsman's ruffled feelings. Knox was appointed as preacher to the English community that was beginning to form in Geneva, and although the English had no church there at that time, and were few in number, the honour was one that Knox keenly appreciated.

He did not, however, have long to enjoy his

new post. Letters had been reaching him from Mrs. Bowes in Berwick. She had clung to the Protestant religion, but she found it hard to be separated from the man on whom she depended for guidance in religious perplexities. Unless he came to see her, she wrote, she would set out for Geneva. Knox enjoyed her company as much as she enjoyed his, but it was impossible to permit her to join him at Geneva unless she came as his mother-in-law. The Bowes family had apparently come to the conclusion that it would be best to let Knox marry Marjory Bowes, and he was very willing, although he showed nothing of a lover's ardour. He departed from Geneva for Berwick in August 1555, and was married to Marjory. Mrs. Bowes could now accompany him to Geneva without fear of scandal, since she was his mother-in-law. But Knox had another mission to perform before going back to Switzerland.

He had not set foot in his native land since that day when, eight years before, he had been transported as a prisoner from St. Andrews. He had, however, kept up connection with his friends among the Protestants, and they were anxious that he should show himself among them. He had been a powerful preacher in St. Andrews, but his reputation had only been local. In England he had won fame as a leader, and, during his exile, he had built up a great reputation as a disputant. His fiery epistles, sent from Dieppe,

had been widely read in Scotland, and his own country was eager to see her famous son.

Knox's tour in Scotland was a triumphal one. He had thought of the Protestants as few in number, but he found that they had swelled to a considerable body, and he was astonished by the strength and boldness of the movement. Remembering the persecution to which they had been subjected in Scotland in previous years, and knowing how harshly the Reformers were even then being punished in England, he had apparently expected to see a country where the new religion was spread only in secret. Instead, however, he discovered that the Reformers took few precautions when they preached, and that rarely did the authorities interfere. Earl Arran had been cast down from the regency, and Mary of Guise, mother of Mary Stuart, had assumed the position in 1554. The new regent was a staunch Catholic, and, as such, disliked the new religion. Her principal aim, however, was to remove antagonism on the part of the Scottish nobility ; she wanted peace in order to pursue her policy of building up a close union with France. Some of the nobles professed the Protestant religion, and Mary of Guise feared that, if she pressed too heavily on the Reformers, these nobles would be driven into an alliance with England. Scotland could not stand another war with the English.

She did not succeed in satisfying the nobles by

her tolerant rule. They might talk of religious freedom, but most of them were more concerned with offices of government, and these offices the queen-mother insisted upon reserving for French favourites or for ecclesiastics. When Knox came to Scotland, a number of the lords sought him out and treated him as a valuable ally. In their eyes he was an important man – one who carried the hallmark of success in other countries. If Protestantism were to succeed in Scotland – and only by the victory of Protestantism could they hope to obtain for themselves the positions then occupied by Catholic ecclesiastics and by Frenchmen – Knox's talents must be enlisted on their side. Such a reception overwhelmed Knox ; but even more encouraging to him were the audiences that hastened to listen to his preaching in different parts of the country.

There had been a great reaction against Catholicism and its representatives. The Catholic Church possessed half the wealth of Scotland. In the course of generations, the monasteries had acquired tremendous properties, and the tithes of many parishes had been ceded to the abbeys at the expense of the local churches. The clergy were corrupt, out of touch with the common people, careless of their mission. Men and women had grown weary of the extortions practised by the immoral and incompetent priests, who neglected to perform services and flaunted their

riches in the face of a nation which years of warfare had rendered poverty-stricken. In Scotland, as elsewhere, bishoprics were conferred upon children still in their cradles, and a man might become an abbot if he had the wealth to purchase the position.

With most of the nobles, the craving for power and an itch to lay their hands on the vast possessions of the monasteries caused the opposition to the Church, and it was the nobility in Scotland who started the Reformation. The commoners were disgusted with the venality of the Church, and were in a mood to listen to the teachings of the new religion. But, although preachers had not been lacking, no great Reformer had arisen to strike the imagination of the ordinary men and women and organise a popular movement against the Roman Church. The nobles had not erred in thinking that they had found a national leader in John Knox.

CHAPTER IV

1555-1558

Knox summoned for heretical teaching at Edinburgh – successful preaching tour – a letter to the regent – Calvin's victory – organisation of the Genevan Church – oppressive measures – Knox called back to Scotland – stopped at Dieppe – *The First Blast of the Trumpet* – return to Geneva – death of Mary Tudor and accession of Elizabeth of England.

“ IF I had not seen it with my eyes, in my own country, I could not have believed it ! ” wrote Knox, in referring to the fervency of the Protestants, but he found several things in the conduct of the Reformers that aroused his bitter condemnation. Many of them attended mass, and claimed that they were justified. The first thing was, they argued, to build up a strong body of opinion ; progress would be retarded if the authorities began a campaign of persecution ; and such a campaign would certainly be instituted if the Reformers attracted attention by absenting themselves from mass in large numbers. Knox could not countenance this view. In his opinion a man must declare his religion openly at whatever cost to himself, and must never in any circumstances compromise with the forces of evil.

He set out on a preaching tour in Scotland, and in several places celebrated communion according

to the reformed service. This defiance, and the scathing attacks that he launched on the Church, produced great enthusiasm among the people, but it alarmed the Catholics. Mary of Guise was begged to put a stop to this dangerous preacher, but she refused to take any action. She asked, however, for particulars of him, and found that there existed considerable doubt regarding his identity. Having lived in England for five years he had acquired an English turn of speech, and some of the Court thought him an Englishman. The Archbishop of Glasgow knew better. "Nay," he said, "no Englishman, it is *Knocks*, that *knave*."

Knox was permitted to proceed on his preaching tour, without interference, throughout the winter, and delivered sermons in Edinburgh, Fifeshire, and Ayrshire. The Catholics, however, had become ever more anxious of the effect of such preaching, and on the 15th of May, 1556, he was summoned to present himself at Blackfriars, in Edinburgh, to answer charges of heretical teaching. Knox had no intention of refusing the challenge, but John Erskine of Dun, one of the most prominent of the leaders of the Protestant movement, and a number of other gentlemen accompanied him to the hearing. The Catholics had not expected the preacher to come with such support, and, feeling unsure of their ground, withdrew the charge. Knox and his bodyguard

retired in triumph, and that day he preached openly in Edinburgh to the largest audience that had ever listened to him in Scotland. On the two following days his success was equally striking, and Knox happily cried, "The trumpet blew the old sound three days together, till private houses, of indifferent largeness, could not contain the voice of it. Oh, sweet were the death that should follow such forty days in Edinburgh as here I have had three."

The failure of the Catholics to stop Knox, and the belief that Mary of Guise was not unfavourably disposed towards the Reformers at this time, encouraged the nobles to hope that the regent might be induced to accord further tolerance to the Protestants if she were approached. The measures against the Reformed preachers were comparatively light, but the nobles believed that all such measures might be abolished. The Earl of Glencairn and the Earl Marischal therefore asked Knox to address a letter to the regent, but, knowing how he loved denunciation, they advised him to be mild in his words. Knox kept a tight rein on himself in the early part of his letter, but as he proceeded he began to threaten. The regent, he pointed out, had no doubt heard such reports of him that she might believe him to be "unworthy to live in the earth." These reports were the work of Satan, but God had preserved his good name, and he had reason to appreciate that

the regent had dealt with him moderately. She ought, however, to realise that many abuses demanded correction. She must not think that matters of religion belonged to the Church. She had her duty, and that duty was clear – she must restrain the ecclesiastics from persecuting the Reformers. Let her be warned that, if she did not curb these idolaters, her fate would be a terrible one. With a fine flourish, Knox made it quite clear that Mary of Guise was damned here and hereafter unless she took it upon herself to come out into the open as the defender of the Protestants. The letter, he explained, only touched the fringe of the matter. If the regent would give him an interview, he would be happy to show her the work that remained for her to do and how she ought to do it.

Mary of Guise glanced at the letter, and then, recognising it to be one of those lengthy effusions of which she had received many in the course of the regency, passed it to the Archbishop of Glasgow, with the remark, "Please you, my Lord, to read a pasquil." These words were reported to Knox, and his anger knew no bounds. That his letter, the letter of a prophet of God, should be dismissed so contemptuously was not to be borne, and from this time onwards he nursed a bitter hatred against the regent. Later he published his letter, and accused Mary of Guise of immorality and of a long succession of revolting

crimes – although, it would appear, he had little or no evidence to support his charges.

Knox remained in Scotland until the summer of 1556. Then a message came from Geneva, inviting him to be co-pastor with Goodman of the English congregation in the town. He set out for Switzerland in July, and hardly had he left Scotland than the Catholics determined to take their revenge on him. They had been forced to withdraw the summons against him when he turned up at Blackfriars with a body of resolute men at his back, but now that he was out of the country and could not put in an appearance the Catholics demanded his presence to answer further charges of heresy. In his absence Knox was condemned, and was burned in effigy.

It was another insult that rankled in Knox's heart and hardened him against any compromise with the Catholics. Happily, however, he found balm in Geneva. The English community had grown in numbers, and had been allotted a church for their own use, so that Knox had an assured position. Calvin had triumphed after years of struggling, and now ruled the city with an iron hand. The discipline that he imposed on the people met with Knox's most enthusiastic approval, and when the reformed religion triumphed in Scotland it was organised on the Genevan model so far as Knox had the power to introduce it.

Calvin was born in France in 1509 ; he had been intended for the Church, but had turned to the law. Even as a student he had been a stern and unbending critic and had earned for himself the name of " the accusative case " among his fellows. He fled from France to escape persecution on religious grounds and, after a short stay in Italy, settled in Geneva in 1536. Geneva was a free city which had won its independence from the Duke of Savoy and was governed by a council of two hundred citizens. Calvin's theories were not at first acceptable to the people, and in 1538 he left Geneva. In 1541, however, he was begged to return, and then he started to develop the organisation which gave rise to the Presbyterian Church.

In Geneva there existed no Catholic menace, since – although Calvin's ideas were not without opponents – the reformed religion had been accepted by all parties. Calvin's duty as he saw it was to lay down a system of government for the Protestants, and he had already, in his twenty-seventh year, published his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, in which he expressed his views on the proper organisation of the reformed Church. Two bodies were appointed, one consisting of six pastors, the other of twelve lay members ; these eighteen representatives formed the Consistory, which controlled all ecclesiastical matters. The civil authority, according to Calvin's view, must

support the decisions of the Consistory and lend its aid in punishing any rebellion against the reformed Church. On the other hand, the civil power must not interfere in any other way in ecclesiastical affairs.

Not until 1555, only a few weeks before Knox's return to Geneva from Frankfort, did Calvin succeed in overwhelming those who favoured a less harsh rule than that proposed by him. Once he had gained the supreme power, Calvin used it most oppressively. He punished harshly those who offended against his tenets, showed no generosity or forbearance towards anyone who disagreed with him, and made criticism of any kind against the established order a dire crime. He suppressed plays and games, and took action against certain citizens for reading romances. Psalm-singing, however, he encouraged, and was easily wounded by any adverse comments on this practice, which he had introduced. One man who, when an ass brayed, remarked, "What a fine psalm!" was thrown into prison; a similar fate overtook another who, riding out one Sunday, was asked why he had not gone to church, and was ill-advised enough to retort that the church would not hold the horse and himself. The punishments were sometimes fantastic. At least one child was put to death for striking his parent.

No liberty existed in Geneva under Calvin's

réglise. A house-to-house visitation was introduced, and every member of the population was forced to undergo an enquiry into his or her habits and beliefs. People were urged to report the least offence on the part of others, and no one was safe from the attentions of spies, who, to serve a private grudge or to gain credit for themselves or from zeal in religion, accused a neighbour of speaking against the Reformers – that was blasphemy – or of some equally heinous crime. The Council of Two Hundred had opposed Calvin's demand that the ministers should have power to excommunicate members, but Calvin had won his point. If nothing worse happened to them, those who did not meet with Calvin's approval were denounced as unfit to receive the sacrament of communion, and usually found it advisable to leave the city.

Everyone in Geneva must attend church ; but everyone could not hope for salvation. Predestination was the root of Calvin's theory, and he denied vehemently that man had free will. God was all-knowing, and He had mapped out every single life in detail. Calvin taught that the elect who were to enjoy life everlasting were chosen by God before they came into the world ; the others were doomed for all time. And, no matter how faulty the elect, they could not fail to enter heaven, while the non-elect, let them live as they might, could never hope to be numbered

among God's chosen. All, of course, might themselves believe that they were certain of everlasting life. But Calvin made it quite clear in his sermons that the elect were few, and that most of the people in Geneva were for ever damned.

Under the shadow of this crushing tyranny, Knox now entered upon the two happiest years of his life. He found it much more comfortable to have a home of his own. His wife Marjory – his “dear bedfellow,” as he calls her – bore him two children, but he says very little indeed about her. Mrs. Bowes, her mother, who had been a marvellous correspondent, did not prove always pleasant when living under the same roof, but Knox nevertheless was glad to have her with him. She was one of the very few people to whom he could speak freely, and was much more important to him than his wife so far as we can judge.

Of preaching, which Knox loved, there was plenty in Geneva. He delivered sermons thrice a week, and some of them lasted for three hours. Once a week the pastors met “to examine all such faults as may be espied, not only amongst others, but chiefly amongst themselves, lest they seem to be culpable of that which our Saviour Christ reproveth in the Pharisees, who could espy a mote in another man's eye and could not see the beam in their own.” In such exercises, Knox must have been thoroughly at home, and we may be sure that he neither spared himself nor others

in the inquisition. His congregation had also to bear with a periodical enquiry into their mode of living, and suffer the correction of their minister, often administered publicly. If any among them objected to the practice, they were silent. Geneva was a refuge which they appreciated, and complainants against Church discipline could not hope to escape expulsion. The English community had grown in importance, for Calvin had been able to induce the Council of Two Hundred to confer citizenship upon foreigners able to pay for the privilege. Among Knox's congregation were Englishmen of learning and reputation, and, as has been pointed out, it is a tribute to Knox's abilities and character that he was chosen to be their minister. The congregation bore the cost of a translation of the Bible into English – the Genevan Bible – but most of the work was performed by the English scholars after Knox's departure from Geneva.

Nine months after his return from Scotland, Knox was summoned back to his native land. A letter reached him from the Earl of Argyll, Lord Glencairn, Lord James Stewart (illegitimate son of the late king, James V), and Erskine of Dun. They informed him that they had pledged their lives and fortune to obtain freedom of worship for the Reformers of Scotland, and pressed him to come and help them in their struggle. Protestantism, they assured him, had grown rapidly,

and they had bright hopes of success. Whether, as is possible, the two messengers who brought the letter added that the lords were plotting to raise a rebellion in Scotland and overthrow the regent by force of arms, cannot be stated. Knox, at any rate, was not attracted by the invitation, either because violence was to be used, or because he doubted the truth of the reports or the sincerity of the signatories of the letter.

As a loyal pastor, however, he submitted the matter to Calvin, and Calvin, who had a high opinion of Knox's talents, and who was naturally anxious that Protestantism should prevail, advised acceptance. Knox waited for four months before he could bring himself to leave Geneva, where he had found so much contentment. His congregation mourned his departure, and Knox seems to have hesitated up to the last whether he was not ill-advised in leaving for Scotland. When he reached Dieppe, two private letters had come to him from Scotland, and they told a different story. According to Knox's correspondents, the position was dangerous, the Protestants were not making progress, and the lords who had invited him were now cooling off in their willingness to sacrifice for the new religion.

Knox had never been happy about the venture, and he took the two letters as proof positive that his original view had been sound and that he should never have left Geneva. When Knox believed

that he had been summoned by heaven to carry out a task, then he allowed nothing to stand in his way. But this man, so fearless on such occasions, showed himself weak and shrinking when he was not assured of divine support. He wrote a letter full of bitter reproach to the lords. They had, he said, misled him scandalously, and he went on to complain that for their sakes he had sacrificed his position at Geneva, where he was honoured and useful. How, he asked, could he return to Geneva after so inglorious an end to an adventure of which so much had been hoped. He exaggerated the injury that he had received, and it is difficult to suppose that Calvin or anyone else would have censured him had he gone back to Geneva. He himself, however, considered that it was impossible to face his old congregation, and he settled down to an extended stay in Dieppe.

Knox remained for seven months in the port, and served as one of the preachers to the Protestants there. Most of his time, however, was employed in literary labours. Two treatises – *A Letter to His Brethren in Scotland*, and *A Letter to the Professors of Truth in Scotland* – were prepared and dispatched from Dieppe, pamphlets which vigorously pointed out the duty of everyone to work for the true religion, and did not omit to state graphically how terribly those who failed to play their part would suffer. But his principal work at Dieppe was *The First Blast of the Trumpet*

Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women. Two women had stopped the spread of Protestantism in the two countries in which Knox was most intimately concerned, and had interfered with the success of his plans : Mary of Guise in Scotland, and Mary Tudor in England. Because of Mary of Guise he was unable to set foot in his native land ; because of Mary Tudor he had been compelled to flee from England and cease his ministrations to the faithful flocks who panted to hear him preach the Word of God. Knox never forgave either of them, and in his *First Blast* he excelled himself in vituperation of women rulers. God, he affirmed – and supported his argument by scriptural references which are not always apposite – had not intended women to rule. It was contrary to nature that they should be raised to positions of authority, and all experience proved that women were incapable and inefficient. That country which permitted them to exercise governmental functions was doomed, and catastrophes could not fail to descend upon it. But Knox did not stop there. He proclaimed that if “ a noble heart ” should arise to suppress this “ monstrous empire of Women,” those who attempted to defend the female rulers would be opposing God’s will, and would certainly incur the divine wrath.

On the Continent, where the Salic law governed the succession, the theory that women should not

rule had a large measure of support, and even in Scotland and England there were many who believed that women were unfitted to wield the sceptre. It was, however, an entirely different thing to claim that anyone who removed the queen of England or the regent of Scotland would be performing a meritorious act, and that the assassin would be entitled to the support of all godly citizens. Knox's *First Blast* is a very poor and ill-considered denunciation, but to accuse him of writing it purely from anger over his personal difficulties is to forget that Knox never quite separated in his mind his own grievances from the wrongs done to his Master. In denouncing women rulers, he believed himself to be speaking with divine authority. A wrong done to him was a wrong done to God, for was he not a prophet of God?

The fiery pamphlet caused a sensation, and was to lead to trouble for Knox later. It was issued anonymously from Geneva, and Calvin claimed that he was ignorant of its publication until a year afterwards. He had "no suspicion of the book," he wrote to England, when protest was made, and when he did learn of its existence he hesitated to take any action lest attention should be drawn to it. It is difficult to believe, however, that Calvin was quite as ignorant as he pretended to be. Like everything else, the printing presses in Geneva were under his control,

and he exercised a careful censorship on all that was issued from them. Knox, moreover, must have acted differently from his ordinary practice if he did not consult Calvin on the book. He valued Calvin's opinion, though he did not slavishly follow it, and usually submitted his works for comment.

There was to be a *Second Blast*, but the *First Blast* had created so great an uproar that Knox contented himself with one outburst on the subject. The book was issued at the beginning of 1558, and in March of that year he was back in Geneva, busily engaged in superintending his congregation, and with less time to spare for literary labours. In December 1557 the English community had again elected him to be a preacher, and he had been glad to return from Dieppe to the one city where in his opinion God's laws were honoured and God's ministers were armed with adequate powers. Mrs. Locke, the wife of the London merchant with whom he had maintained correspondence, had come to Geneva, and Knox had now two women, apart from his wife, for confidantes.

Knox was happy in his domestic circle and in his work – although at times he wondered whether he ought not to have stayed in Dieppe for a summons from Scotland – but on the 17th November, 1558, occurred an event which destroyed his happy circumstances. Mary Tudor had died, and

Elizabeth now ruled in England. Protestantism was re-established in their own country, and the English exiles hastened to leave Geneva for home. Knox was left without a congregation.

CHAPTER V

1558-1559

“The Lords of the Congregation” – marriage of Mary Queen of Scots – reformed preachers summoned to Edinburgh – rioting in the capital – the Beggars’ Summons – penalties against the Protestants – Knox and Cecil – rebellion of the Congregation – the outbreak at Perth.

KNOX needed activity, and he missed the worshipping audience at Geneva which he had disciplined with so stern a hand. Three months after Mary Tudor’s death, he decided to leave Switzerland, and he began the journey to Dieppe. He had kept up communication with Scotland (and had issued two more of his fierce letters, to the Scots lords and commons respectively), and encouraging news had come to him. In December 1557, Protestant lords had entered into a covenant (or band) vowing to surrender life and property if necessary in order to “establish the most blessed Word of God and his congregation,” and renouncing “the whole congregation of Satan.” The lords who signed this covenant became known as the “Lords of the Congregation,” and numbered among them some of the most prominent nobles in Scotland.

This definite undertaking to which such powerful lords were committed represented a great step

forward, and other news of the position in Scotland was no less cheering to Knox. For the people were also showing their opposition to the priests and their hatred of "idolatry." Ballads written against the immorality, corruption, and ignorance of the clergy and the superstitions taught by the Catholic Church were becoming more numerous, and were repeated everywhere. The Church which had been an object of terror had now changed to an object of mockery. In several places men had besieged the churches and destroyed the images. The great figure of St. Giles in Edinburgh had been triumphantly captured, and, after being "drowned," had been burned amid the acclamation of the crowd.

The Protestant nobles had felt strong enough to demand from the regent, in December 1557, that the reformed religion should be permitted to be preached in private houses. Mary of Guise thought it politic to agree. Her aim was to bring about a union between the crowns of Scotland and France. She wanted to marry her daughter, Mary Stuart, for whom she was regent, to the Dauphin of France, but there was considerable antagonism to such an alliance. The important positions of State were filled by Frenchmen, and French soldiers overran the country. The nobles resented the loss of power, and the commoners were incensed against the brutality of the French troops. The union of Scotland and France could

not fail to be disadvantageous to the smaller country, and, although England was the ancient enemy, a strong party in Scotland favoured an alliance with England rather than France. But, despite the opposition, Mary of Guise secured the consent of the Scots Parliament to the marriage of Mary Stuart and the Dauphin of France, and it was celebrated in Paris in April 1558.

Mary of Guise had surmounted one difficulty, but another remained. She wanted the crown to be conferred upon the Dauphin, and the proposal evoked bitter protest. In such circumstances, the regent had no wish to raise the ire of the Protestants, and, although the Catholics complained against the liberty allowed to the reformed preachers, she refused to interfere with the arrangement that the new religion should be freely preached in private houses. The Protestants were not satisfied with that concession, a considerable advance on the former position as it was. The Catholic priests spoke in churches, and surely the reformed religion should be trumpeted forth without any restriction. To men who were firmly convinced that Catholicism was the religion of the Devil, it was galling that their message should be confined to private audiences. Inspired by the progress that they had already made, the Reformers began to hold public services.

The Catholics insisted that the regent should

prohibit the public preaching of the reformed religion. Mary of Guise had wanted to placate the Reformers, since their antagonism would have been inconvenient and perhaps dangerous, but she dared not reject the pressing demand of the Catholics. She was herself a Catholic, and while the Protestants might be neutral in the political struggle, they could never support her; the Church, on the other hand, and the French Catholics were her allies, and she would be lost if they deserted her. Even now, however, Mary hoped that a compromise could be found between Catholics and Protestants, and she summoned the reformed preachers to appear at Edinburgh in July 1558. The preachers answered the command, but they feared measures against them and came accompanied by a strong body of supporters. Fearing a riot if any action were taken against the preachers, the proceedings were quickly closed. But rumours had spread that the preachers were in danger, and a crowd of Protestants marched into Edinburgh. They learned that the preachers were safe, but they were not satisfied with that assurance. It was necessary that the regent should be warned, and, forcing themselves into her presence, they told her that they would demand a reckoning if the preachers were interfered with.

Mary of Guise, surprised at the strength and resolution of the Protestants, decided not to make

any further move for the present. Meanwhile riots were frequent in different parts of Scotland. The Protestants attacked the priests, seized the images, and interfered with services ; while the Catholics, for their part, broke up the meetings of the Protestants and mishandled the reformed preachers. The Protestant lords felt that the only way to bring peace to the country was to afford complete freedom to the reformed religion, and in the autumn of 1558 they petitioned the regent to authorise the public preaching of the reformed religion or face the consequences of disorder.

Another party now appeared upon the scene, or, at least, so it seemed. For a proclamation was found posted to the churches on the 1st of January, 1559, and purported to be the work of " the blind, crooked, lame, widows, orphans, and all other poor visited by the hand of God." It demanded that the Church should restore the money and lands it possessed to the " beggars " who suffered from want. Warning was given that unless the priests and monks surrendered all their properties before Whitsunday 1559 the beggars would " in whole number and with the help of God and assistance of his saints on earth, of whose ready support we doubt not, enter and take possession of our said patrimony, and eject you utterly forth of the same. Let him, therefore, that before hath stolen, steal no more ; but

rather let him work with his hands, that he may be helpful to the poor." But this extraordinary document did not emanate from the poor. It is obviously the work of the Reformers.

While these exciting events were happening in Scotland, John Knox was in Dieppe fuming against Elizabeth of England and her secretary Cecil. Knox did not intend to go straight to Scotland. He had, he wrote to Cecil, certain matters to mention to him which could not be put on paper, and he also wanted to visit his old congregations in Berwick and Newcastle. For those reasons, therefore, he asked for permission to sail to England and travel through the country to Scotland. Cecil would not agree. *The First Blast* had been written by Knox against Mary Tudor and Mary of Guise, but its arguments applied equally to any female sovereign, and Queen Elizabeth, now on the English throne, had read the pamphlet and looked upon Knox as a dangerous scoundrel. He had openly declared that the assassination of a woman ruler was a deed which should have the support of all godly men. Elizabeth, who was insecure on the throne, could not forgive anyone who suggested that a subject was ever justified in rising against his ruler. She hated Knox, and she hated the Calvinism that he taught.

Two further letters went from Knox to Cecil. *The First Blast*, Knox pleaded, had not been aimed

against Elizabeth, and did not refer to her at all. But if he had been wrong, which he would not admit, Elizabeth should show how queenly she was in overlooking the alleged fault. He had not, he vigorously protested, written in his pamphlet that all women were unfit to rule ; he had, indeed, expressly excluded "such as God, by singular privilege, and for certain causes, known only to Himself, hath excepted from the common rank of women." Elizabeth was not to be placated by any arguments. Cecil maintained his refusal, and Knox, after spending several vexatious weeks in Dieppe, at last sailed for Scotland at the end of April 1559.

The religious struggle in Scotland had been carried several stages further. The Beggars' Summons, with its threats of forcibly seizing the property of the Church at Whitsunday, had thrown the priests into a panic. Even if the originators of the Summons did not intend to act upon it, many of the poor might regard it as an invitation to loot the churches and monasteries at Whitsunday – and might rebel independently. The regent was no less concerned at the possible effects of the warning and at the defiance to her authority. When, therefore, the Church urged upon her the need for strong action against the Reformers, she issued a proclamation making it an offence punishable with death to interfere with religious services. The eating of flesh during

Lent was to be visited with the same penalty.

There had been considerable controversy over Mary of Guise's treatment of the Reformers. For a time she had been conciliatory, but now she began a vigorous assault on the Protestant preachers. France, on which country she depended for aid in keeping order in Scotland, had been engrossed in troubles at home, and had sent only meagre assistance in men. Those troubles had been settled, and the regent could rely upon more active support from the French. It is suggested, therefore, that Mary of Guise extended concessions to the Protestants only because she lacked the strength to suppress the followers of the new religion, and that her intention always had been to crush the Reformers as soon as she had ample French backing for the purpose.

Mary of Guise, however, seems to have been sincere in her efforts to satisfy the Reformers and to have nursed no plans of persecution. She would probably have been agreeable to let them retain the concessions that she had granted, but the Reformers pressed for more and still more liberty – as they were quite entitled to do. But their tenaciousness, and the threatening aspect that the Lords of the Congregation had adopted, made it necessary for the regent definitely to take sides. She could not hope to please the Reformers without granting them full freedom of worship – perhaps not even then, since many

of them agitated for the establishment of Protestantism as the State religion, and the proscription of Catholicism within the realm. Even had religious tolerance contented the Reformers, it could only be extended to them by the regent if she were prepared to offend the Catholics. The Catholics were too powerful to be flouted by the regent.

The pressure of the Catholics, and the militancy of the Reformers, forced Mary of Guise into a policy of Protestant repression. She was, however, not blind to the defects in the Church, and she hoped that if they were removed Catholicism would flourish and the reformed religion dwindle in importance. In the month following the issue of her proclamation, the Provincial Council met and attempted to reform the ecclesiastical system. Some of the amounts previously collected by the Church were to be remitted ; a higher standard of morals was to be demanded from the clergy ; sermons were to be preached in the vernacular ; and priests having charge of parishes were to be compelled to carry out the duties of their office, which many of them had neglected in the past.

Such measures, even had they been carried through, would not have saved Scotland for Catholicism. The time for them had passed, and the people were resolved that Protestantism would conquer. The regent realised the strength of the reformed movement when she summoned

the Protestant preachers to appear for trial, on the 10th of May, at Stirling. Immediately there was an outcry in different parts of Scotland, but particularly in Perth and Fifeshire. The people began to arm, and threats were made that, if Mary of Guise did not withdraw the summons, the preachers would march into Stirling with an army at their back. The summons was not withdrawn, and the Protestants armed for fight in the defence of their ministers.

Perth became the headquarters of the Protestants, and the reformed religion was openly adopted throughout that town. Some of the leaders urged that the army should lose no time in advancing on Stirling, where the regent was in residence and had a small French army for her protection ; but other counsels prevailed. The Lords were anxious that there should be no fighting if it could be avoided, and they sent Erskine of Dun, one of the signatories of the First Covenant, to confer with the regent. His instructions were to say that the people were loyal to the regent, but that the accused ministers must be preserved from harm at the hands of her Catholic advisers. The regent promised that the charges against the Reformed preachers would be dropped ; but she did not honour her undertaking. The trial of the preachers was held in their absence, and they were condemned as outlaws.

The news was brought to Perth, where it created wild anger. John Knox was in the town. He had landed in Scotland on the 2nd of May, had gone to Edinburgh, and thence to Dundee ; at the latter place he had joined the Protestants, who were marching to Perth, and had remained with the " congregation " since. The treachery of the regent was known in Perth just before Knox was due to preach a sermon in the church. It was a situation with which he was well qualified to deal, and he took full advantage of it. He called upon the Reformers to be resolute in their fight for God, and he castigated the regent and the Catholics. Knox appeared before his fellow-countrymen as a preacher who had won reputation in Geneva, and who was known all over Scotland as the author of the most vigorous attacks on the Church. He had always been able to move audiences, and he appears to have captured this one completely by his eloquence and his prophetic denunciations.

But the sermon, so notable in the history of the Reformation in Scotland, might have had little immediate effect but for a strange incident. The Reformers had no churches of their own, and Knox had spoken in one of the Catholic churches. When his sermon was over, and the congregation was scattering, a priest stepped forward and began to celebrate mass. In a town which was held by the Reformers, and in a church which still

echoed with the fiery words of the greatest of the Protestant preachers, it was a foolhardy action. No one can say why the priest should have engaged in so provocative a sacrament at such a time. Courage was not only on the side of the Protestants, and the most probable explanation is that the priest wanted to show his contempt for the Reformers whatever might be the cost to himself. It has been suggested that the priest was a fool who did not realise the danger that he was running, but it is hard to believe that any man could be unaware that to perform mass before an audience which had just been hearing about the iniquity of the sacrament and those who celebrated it was to run a terrible risk.

Whatever his intention, the result of his action is not in doubt. A boy shouted out that it was "intolerable, that when God, by His word, hath plainly damned idolatry, we shall stand and see it used in despite." The priest struck the boy, who responded by throwing a stone at the Catholic. The words attributed to the interrupter do not suggest a boy, but that he should have gone to church with a stone in his pocket certainly does. His missile missed the priest, but it crashed against an image, which came tumbling to the ground. The fall of the image was followed by pandemonium. The Reformers rushed forward and tore down the other images, smashed the altar, broke the windows, and thoroughly gutted

the church. They were not to be restrained. Not until every image that they could find in Perth had been broken or burned did the Reformers begin to consider the consequences of the open rebellion.

CHAPTER VI

1559-1560

Destruction of the monasteries – “a rascal multitude” – Lord James Stewart – the Lords support the rebellion – truce between Mary of Guise and the Congregation – Knox’s growing authority – the Protestants seize the capital – Knox negotiates with England – the Congregation depose the regent – defeat of the Reformers – death of Mary of Guise.

THE example of Perth was followed in other places, and doubtless some of those who took part in the looting of the monasteries and abbeys believed that the attacks were made in accordance with the Beggars’ Summons. For that Summons had declared that the priests would be turned out of their institutions at Whitsunday, and the outbreak at Perth had occurred only four days before Whitsunday. Knox hated images with an almost mad hatred, but he could not defend the gutting of the monasteries. He writes that such attacks were “the work of a rascal multitude who cared nothing for religion,” but the destruction was led by the Reformers, and they gloried in their efforts to erase from the face of Scotland the marks of the Catholic beast. Then, and later in the year, many of the great abbeys of Scotland were attacked by the people, and nothing was left but the bare walls.

Knox was probably more concerned with the political consequences of the fanaticism of the Reformers than with the destruction of Catholic property. He realised that the Lords of the Congregation were not whole-heartedly for the new religion, and that they might hesitate to throw in their lot with rebels. It was as he had feared. Mary of Guise was clever enough to represent the rioting as a threat to all established authority. The nobles had in the past often fought openly against the crown, but they had always crushed rebellion organised by the common people. It was a dangerous precedent to let the lower orders think that they could fight against their betters, and some of the nobles who had sworn to sacrifice life and property in the cause of the reformed religion ranged themselves against the Protestants after the outbreak at Perth.

The regent declared that she would put the town to fire and sword and exact a terrible reckoning from the rioters, but she did not move out from Stirling until two weeks later. Her army was small, and she was unwilling to face the Protestants until reinforcements had come up. Knox and the Congregation had meanwhile tried to appease the regent's wrath. They denied that they were in rebellion against the regent ; all they wanted, they declared, was freedom to worship according to the dictates of God ; and, if that were granted, they would be the most

loyal of subjects. Mary of Guise ignored these protestations. She was succeeding in attracting the nobles to her side, and the Reformers saw with dismay that the regent's army was swelling rapidly. Having failed in their negotiations, Knox and his followers prepared for a resistance which seemed likely to end in disaster for them.

Courage returned, however, when crowds of Protestants from other parts of the country rushed to lend their aid in the defence of Perth, the only walled town in Scotland, and one well equipped to stand a siege. The regent became alarmed, and halted her army at Auchterarder, three hours' march from Perth. Argyll and Lord James Stewart, both of whom had vowed to sacrifice everything in the Protestant cause, were sent forward to treat with the rebels in Perth. The latter had become emboldened by the accession to their strength, but nevertheless they still offered the same terms as before. If the regent would permit them freedom to worship as their consciences demanded, they would submit themselves to the laws of the land. Knox did not fail to point out to Argyll and Lord James that God expected them to fulfil their vow to fight for the reformed faith, but on this occasion his words had apparently little influence.

The regent, meanwhile, had learned that Glencairn, with an army of over 2,000 men, was on

his way to join the insurgents at Perth, and, as this addition to the Protestants would make the rebel army stronger than her own, she decided to accept the terms that she had previously rejected. Argyll and Lord James returned to Perth, and a treaty was signed promising a general amnesty and religious freedom. Knox now made another effort to make Argyll and Lord James realise how grievously they had erred in supporting the regent against the Protestants, and this time his words did not pass unheard. The two emissaries undertook that if Mary of Guise broke the terms of the treaty they would join the insurgents.

The regent entered Perth, and almost at once trouble broke out. A large part of her army was French, and the French were hated by the Scots. A boy was killed by the French troops in Perth – an accident, according to the regent, deliberately, according to the Reformers. Then the people of Perth protested that French soldiers were billeted in the town, although the regent had promised that no French troops would enter Perth. Further fuel was added to the fire when the regent attended mass in one of the ruined churches. The Protestants felt that she had no intention of keeping her word, and Argyll and Lord James, on the ground that she had already broken it, marched out of the town with their followers, and raised the standard of rebellion.

The two lords went to St. Andrews. That town now became the headquarters of the insurgents, and a considerable army collected under their banner. The regent's troops, under the French commander, d'Oysel, advanced towards St. Andrews at the beginning of June. The rebels marched out to stop their approach, and the two armies met at Cupar. D'Oysel, however, found himself outnumbered, and would not risk a battle. Again an attempt was made to secure peace, but the regent wanted the Protestants to undertake not to engage in preaching in public. This offer was promptly refused, but both sides agreed to a truce, during which fresh negotiations were to be conducted. Mary sent no envoys to treat with the insurgents. The reason for her failure is said to have been disgust at the conduct of the Protestants, who, despite the truce, attacked a monastery and looted it. Whatever the reason, her decision not to treat with the rebels was a fatal one. All hope of peace was lost.

The Protestants returned to Perth, which they had given up to the regent, and again took possession of it. Knox had been on a preaching tour in Fife, where his impassioned appeals from the pulpit had raised tremendous enthusiasm everywhere, but he had joined the main army, and he accompanied it to Perth. He was treated with deference as one of the leaders of the Reformation, but not even his words could stem

the mad vandalism of the Reformers. The work of destruction was completed in Perth, and then the Protestants attacked the Catholic edifices in the neighbourhood. The policy was to leave the churches, bare of all adornment, for use as places of worship for the Reformers ; but abbeys and monasteries were completely gutted. They had no place in the Kirk of Scotland.

The regent still had an army at her back, and the Lords of the Congregation were anxious that this last threat to the success of the Reformation should be faced. They marched to Stirling, where the regent was reported to be camped, but found on their arrival that she had hastened to Edinburgh. Looting as they went, the Reformers pressed on to the capital. Again they failed to find the regent. She had taken refuge in Dunbar, not only a well-fortified town, but one from which she could easily slip over to France if matters became desperate.

The situation, however, did not seem to her quite lost. The Reformers had entered the capital with 6,000 men, had seized the strategic points, and possessed themselves of the minting irons. With the capture of the capital, however, it seemed to many of the army that the Reformation was won, and now they returned to their homes, despite the appeals of the preachers and other leaders. The 6,000 men with which the Lords of the Congregation had entered Edinburgh on

the 29th of June had dwindled to a quarter of that number within three weeks.

Nor was it only in the behaviour of the army that the reforming leaders were disappointed. They had been in communication with Elizabeth of England, and had proposed a marriage between her and Arran, the next in succession after Mary Queen of Scots. If Elizabeth married Arran, the insurgents proposed to place him on the throne in place of Mary and banish the regent. England was alive to the danger of the union of the French and Scotch crowns, but Elizabeth could not make up her mind what course to pursue. Marriage with Arran was a distasteful project, but she would not definitely dismiss it. The Protestants urged her to decide quickly, and in any case to support them with money. Elizabeth, however, was miserly in doling out sums to the rebels, and the Protestants found themselves in Edinburgh with practically no resources. The minting irons, with which they could have put their own money into circulation, were never used. The Protestants vehemently claimed that they were not in rebellion against the crown, and they would not prejudice their position by issuing their own money.

Mary of Guise had meanwhile been strengthening her army at Dunbar by bribing Scots nobles to desert from the Protestants, and on the 23rd of July she sent her troòps, under d'Oysel, against

the capital. The regent's forces numbered some 2,500 men, and the 1,500 Reformers seemed panic-stricken at the sight of the advancing army. They had hoped that Leith, which the royal troops must pass, would strike a blow for the Reformation, but Leith had tamely surrendered. The Congregation in the capital also proved unwilling to fight, and Mary of Guise found herself again in possession of her capital without a single engagement having been fought.

The absence of fighting is a feature of the Reformation in Scotland. Both sides still hoped for a compromise, and were anxious to avoid bloodshed. The plan to place another ruler on the throne had been hatched by only a few of the leaders of the Congregation, and was unknown to most of the Reformers. By far the greater number of the Protestant army did not think of themselves as in rebellion, but that fiction would be impossible to sustain if the armies clashed. Although the Regent had gained possession of the capital, she knew that her position was weak, since the Reformers had previously gathered an army which outnumbered hers, and could gather it again. She therefore proposed a truce on generous terms. For six months the Protestants were to undertake to obey the laws of the realm and not to interfere with Catholic institutions ; she, for her part, promised that during that period no French troops would be introduced into the

country, and that Edinburgh would have the freedom to "use and choose what religion and manner thereof they may please."

The Congregation accepted the terms, but neither party to the treaty honoured them. Mary of Guise did not intend to let the six months until the beginning of January slip past and then find herself at the end of the time faced by a larger army than she had at her command. She may not have wished to deal harshly with the Protestants, but she meant to be in a position to impose her will if need be. French troops were therefore introduced into the country, and the regent started to fortify Leith, the port of Edinburgh, and only a few miles distant from it. The reforming leaders, for their part, could not restrain their followers from breaking up Catholic services, and they did not try very hard. They distrusted the regent's intentions, and they renewed their appeals to England for assistance.

Knox had left Edinburgh after its surrender to the regent, and had gone on a preaching tour, crowds gathering to listen to him wherever he preached. But he was in close touch with the Lords of the Congregation. He had been appointed secretary, and on him devolved the correspondence with the English Court. Elizabeth would not permit his name to be spoken in her presence, but Cecil was anxious that Scotland should not become a province of France,

and he held out hopes of English intervention. A marriage between Elizabeth and Arran now seemed quite out of the question. Cecil, however, was prepared to give Scotland assistance if it could be done secretly. But, he asked, what would Scotland promise in return? Knox, on the authority of the Lords, assured him that the Protestants would "set abroad a charge and commandment to our posterity, that the amity and league between you and us . . . be kept inviolated for ever."

Cecil's problem was how to keep the English intervention secret; his sovereign, Elizabeth, not only hated Knox, but condemned all those who dared to rise against their ruler, and she refused to allow English aid to be given openly. Moreover, there was another point: England and France were for the time being at peace, and English intervention in Scotland would be a breach of her treaty with France. Knox had asked to be allowed to come to England and discuss the objections, and Cecil, with much reluctance, arranged for him to confer with Crofts, governor of Berwick, who was fully apprised of the view of the English Court. Nothing came of the meeting: Knox was not a man to act in secret in anything, and a sharp reproof came from Cecil that the negotiations were known to Mary of Guise and must be discontinued. Later a more discreet representative

was sent to Berwick by the Lords of the Congregation.

Back in Scotland, Knox maintained his correspondence with Crofts. The objections raised by the English seemed to Knox mere trifles. If England really must be secret over the matter, he wrote, let English soldiers be sent without anyone knowing that the English Court was aware of their destination. "The sending of a thousand or more men to use can break no league nor point of peace contracted betwixt you and France," he argued ; " for it is free for your subjects to serve in war any prince or nation for their wages." He added, " If you fear that such excuses will not prevail, you may declare them rebels to your realm, when you shall be assured that they shall be in our company." Crofts was more amused than disgusted at the suggestion of this expedient. Anyone, he replied, could see through such a transparent device. Knox felt ashamed of his plan, and admitted that he had been unreasonable, though he could not forbear from pointing out that his scheme was not without precedents.

The aid from England on which they had depended seemed unlikely to be forthcoming, but the Lords of the Congregation nevertheless determined on the bold step of deposing the regent. On the 21st of October, most of the great nobles, together with representatives from the burghs, assembled at Edinburgh to deliberate upon their

course of action. Willock, the appointed reformed preacher of the capital, and Knox were asked to state their opinion whether the assembly could lawfully remove the regent from office. Willock replied in the affirmative, and Knox agreed, with some characteristic qualifications : in deposing the regent, he said, the assembly must not allow the rights of Mary Stuart and her husband to be affected ; they must be sure in their own minds that they did not act out of malice to the regent, but were actuated by the desire to protect the true religion ; and, lastly, they must not make it impossible for Mary of Guise to be restored to office if she showed herself worthy of restoration. The assembly hesitated no longer. A proclamation was issued declaring that Mary of Guise had been deposed from the regency, and that, until a Parliament had decided the government of the country, a council would be responsible for the administration of Scotland.

Before that assembly, the Congregation had again taken control of Edinburgh – Mary of Guise had obtained in all not more than a thousand fresh French troops, and had chosen to concentrate them in Leith rather than in the capital. If Leith fell, then Scotland would be in the hands of the Reformers, and the latter, who had about ten thousand men, felt confident that they could capture the port. Leith, however, had good fortifications, while the Congregation were

without siege machinery. The Protestants soon discovered that they had overestimated their powers. Some of the army deserted in despair of ever capturing so formidable a place ; others refused to give their services unless they were paid. The Lords tried desperately to raise money, but they had no success. England had at last sent a thousand pounds, but the Earl of Bothwell had intercepted the remittance, and the loss was a further severe blow. The actual fighting was little. On the last day of October the French sallied out of Leith and drove the Reformers back, and on the 5th of November they administered a crushing defeat on the Congregation. The Lords did not try to collect their army, which still outnumbered that of the regent. They and their followers fled to Stirling.

On the next day Knox preached to the disheartened men. There was talk of making peace with the regent, but Knox would have none of it. They fought in God's cause, and if they deserted now they showed themselves to lack faith. The wicked had triumphed, but if God, for His own inscrutable purpose, had permitted His people to meet with defeat, were the Reformers to show themselves faint-hearted at the first reverse ? If they read their Bibles, they would know that the chosen people had at other times suffered such tribulation, and they would know that in the end God's aid brought the victory. Knox's words

put new courage into the Protestants. A council was called for that afternoon, and it was decided that there should be no surrender. An ambassador was appointed to go to London and urge upon Queen Elizabeth the dire need of the Protestants. This mission was entrusted to Maitland of Lethington. He had been one of Mary's most trusted counsellors, but he had joined the Congregation, and was to show himself in the future a man who could be faithful to none. But he was an experienced and subtle diplomat, and was probably the best messenger whom the Reformers could have sent to appeal to the English for assistance.

The Congregation scattered. Knox went on another preaching tour, and found that, although the leaders had shown signs of weakness, the people were as enthusiastic as ever for the reformed religion and as certain as himself of its ultimate triumph. Mary of Guise seemed to have been satisfied with her success for the present, and not until three months after the retreat of the Protestants did she attempt to subdue the stronger centres held by them. D'Oysel invaded Fife at the head of the regent's army, and, although a force under Arran and Lord James Stewart desperately tried to stop his progress, the French commander advanced to within a few miles of St. Andrews.

The town would doubtless have fallen before

d'Oysel's attack but for the appearance of an English fleet. Maitland of Lethington had convinced Queen Elizabeth that the Scots were not fighting against their duly appointed ruler but against the French ; and Elizabeth had at length openly declared herself. She had entered into a treaty with the Lords at the end of February 1560, and, in addition to the fleet, had dispatched 7,000 men across the border.

Events now moved rapidly. The regent's troops took shelter in Leith, which was besieged by land and sea on the 6th of April. The Lords had entered into another covenant, undertaking " with our bodies, goods, friends, and all that we may do, to set forward the Reformation of Religion, according to God's word." They sent a copy of their vow to Mary of Guise. She was in the castle at Edinburgh, having asked to be allowed to go there from Leith. For over a year she had been in ill health, and now she was attacked by dropsy. According to Knox, she expressed the opinion that, through bad counsel, she had fought against the best men in her kingdom, and was overcome by the thought of the disasters that she had brought on Scotland. She died on the 10th of June, 1560 – Knox tells that she died in great agony, and rejoices in the manner of her death as God's punishment on a cursed woman.

Despite the large attacking force compared with the numbers in Leith, the port had held out

against all assaults. It was realised, however, that the siege could only have one termination, and after the death of Mary of Guise negotiations were at once begun for peace. No one in Leith had authority to commit the young Mary Stuart, but emissaries from France arrived with full powers. Peace was signed, and, although no reference was made to religion, Protestantism was established in Scotland.

CHAPTER VII

1560-1561

Triumph of the Congregation – penalties against the Catholics – Knox appointed to St. Giles, Edinburgh – the Confession of Faith – organisation of the Kirk – a scheme for national education – the Book of Discipline not accepted by Parliament – death of Knox's wife – arrival of Mary Queen of Scots – marriage projects – Knox's criticisms of the queen.

MARY STUART was now Queen of France as well as of Scotland, for, on the death of Henry II, her husband, Francis, had ascended the French throne. For the present she did not visit her kingdom of Scotland, but entrusted to her advisers the duty of restoring peace. Her embassy, however, was not to treat with the Lords of the Congregation ; the latter were in rebellion against the State, and could not be recognised. The treaty was therefore drawn up between Francis and Mary, King and Queen of France and Scotland, and Elizabeth, Queen of England. The refusal to acknowledge the authority of the Lords caused considerable dissatisfaction, but the treaty granted practically all that the Scots had demanded. The French troops were to be withdrawn, except for small garrisons in two ports, and the country was to be governed by a council composed of nominees of the Congregation and of

the sovereign, with the Congregation representatives in the majority. Provision was made for the summoning of Parliament, and its decisions were to be regarded as law, although the assembly was held in the absence of the ruler. Ecclesiastics were excluded from specified offices of State, and the right was reserved to Parliament of intervening in the administration of the realm and in foreign affairs.

The treaty was concluded in July 1560 and was celebrated with national rejoicing and a great service in St. Giles, Edinburgh. No reference had been made to religion, but the Reformers had not the least doubt that Protestantism would become the official religion, and that Catholicism would be abolished within the kingdom. Protestant ministers were appointed to the different towns, and Knox, as the most famous of the preachers, was allotted Edinburgh as his parish. To others the struggle might seem to be over, but he was of a different opinion. He had watched the development of the contest between the Congregation and the regent with growing anxiety. In Knox's view, the fight should have been a fight for religion, but it had in its later stages become a battle for national liberty with religion pushed into the background. He had seen many things in the conduct of the Lords of the Congregation of which he strongly disapproved, and he realised that with these men in

authority victory had not yet been won for the Kirk of Scotland.

Parliament met on the 1st of August, 1560 – one of the largest ever held in Scotland, and the most momentous. A petition was presented asking that a law should be passed against Catholicism, and that Protestantism should be made the legal religion of the country, and Parliament was inclined to grant the demands. But first the new religion must be defined, and a committee was appointed to compile a Confession of Faith. Knox was one of the members, and the Confession, which was drawn up in four days, shows his hand clearly. The Confession was largely founded on the system which Calvin had laid down, and which Knox had seen in operation during his two years in Geneva. With only three dissentients, Parliament accepted the Confession, and imposed the penalty of death on those who practised the Catholic religion after two warnings. But Knox was not altogether satisfied. He had hoped that Parliament would transfer to the Kirk the property of the Catholic Church, but the nobles, who had seized much of that property for themselves, showed no intention of surrendering their spoil. Parliament dodged the question, but it appointed Knox and five other ministers to draw up the details of the organisation of the Kirk, and Knox was resolved that the endowment of the Kirk should not be

overlooked. In January 1561 he and his fellow-ministers presented to Parliament the famous Book of Discipline.

The Kirk was to be all-powerful – God came first and the Kirk, as the voice of God on earth, must dominate every part of the life of the nation. The ministers were to be elected by the people, and the people would have the power to depose them at any time if their conduct warranted it. But while in office the ministers had far-reaching authority. They could excommunicate any person, and such a sentence meant that no one must have any dealings with the excommunicate, or speak to him, and that his children should be denied the sacrament of baptism. Before such a punishment were inflicted, however, the offender received a chance to reform. Knox's system laid it down that everyone had a duty to report any failing on the part of his brethren. If a charge was made, and was found to be proved on enquiry, then the offender was warned, and, if he repented, he was dismissed with a caution ; if, however, the sinner was defiant, the congregation was asked to pray for him on the following Sunday, and this was repeated once or twice as the situation seemed to require. Only if the sinner proved impervious to all such pressure was excommunication imposed.

But Knox had known the abuses which crept in when the clergy were clothed with great authority,

and he did not intend that Protestant ministers should be the only arbiters. The congregation not only elected the minister, it also elected elders and deacons, who formed a session, and were responsible for all discipline. The minister might in practice dominate the session, but in theory the session was the board of control. The system was thoroughly democratic, since any member of the congregation could be elected to the session, and the elders and deacons must present themselves for re-election every year.

Calvin's theory had been that the civil power must support the ecclesiastical power, and Knox had adopted that theory in its entirety. The Book of Discipline laid down the duty of the magistrates. If a sinner proved recalcitrant and the Kirk called upon the civil authority, then the latter was in duty bound to take action against the offender. Certain offences, however, were in any case proper to be dealt with by the magistrates and not by the Kirk. Such offences were murder, attacks upon the reformed religion, adultery, etc. But, while the magistrates were under an obligation to support the Kirk, they must on no account seek to interfere with the internal affairs of the Protestants. The civil power was forbidden to intervene in the election of ministers, elders, and deacons, nor could it challenge the punishments imposed by the Kirk Session.

. In regard to the finance of the Kirk, Knox did not spare the nobles. He claimed that all the possessions of the Catholic Church must be handed over to the newly established Kirk. From these resources, the ministers were to be paid, although the congregation must also contribute. But Knox had always protested that the Catholic Church had no right to use its endowments solely to support its own servants, and one of the causes of the Reformation had been the rich establishments of the Catholic clergy which were maintained at the expense of the nation. Knox did not wish to see the Kirk fall into the evil ways of the Church that it had supplanted ; and, while he laid claim to all the property of the Catholic Church, he put forward a scheme for its distribution which was in advance of anything previously adopted. The Kirk was to administer what was in effect a system of poor relief, and the principles enunciated by Knox were to be followed by reformers a hundred years later in Scotland and other countries.

Knox had another use for the wealth which was to be transferred to the Kirk, and in some ways it is more important than any other part of the Book of Discipline. The people of Scotland must be in the service of the Kirk or of the nation. The young must be trained to use their abilities, and this could only be done by a system of education. As the service of the Kirk was the

more important, and as those who served the nation otherwise must also be taught to follow the godly life, Knox wanted all education to be in the hands of the Kirk. The Catholic Church had maintained schools in Scotland as in other countries, and although, before the Reformation, schools had been established in Scotland by the civil authority, they were generally under ecclesiastical influence.

Knox, however, wanted the Kirk to be the only body concerned with education. The Book of Discipline pleaded for elementary education for everyone ; children who seemed likely to benefit from further education were to be transferred to secondary schools ; and the cream of the secondary-school pupils was to be given a university education at the expense of the Kirk. This was an ambitious project, but a thoroughly sound one. Not until two hundred years after Knox put forward his scheme for compulsory elementary education did such a scheme come into force in Britain. Within the last thirty years, and particularly since the War, facilities have been given which enable the promising student to obtain a secondary or university education at little cost to his parents, but even to-day many who would benefit from such an education fail to obtain it. There are few people who have not known a brilliant student denied a higher education because of the selfishness of his

or her parents, or because the parents could not bear the loss of the boy's or girl's earning capacity. There must be fewer still who have not met the thick-headed undergraduate whose only qualification for higher education is the wealth of his family.

The educational scheme was not approved by Parliament, but Knox's insistence on the need of education has had a considerable effect upon the development of the country. For long Scotland was the most advanced European country in education ; access to its secondary schools and its universities was easier to the poor student there than elsewhere ; and the value of education was more widely appreciated. The critics of Knox have either ignored his scheme for education or have dismissed it as impracticable. Impracticable the scheme may have been in his time – even that is doubtful – but it is a scheme which may yet be generally adopted, though the nations will hardly hand over the educational machine to the clergy. In Soviet Russia a scheme such as that advocated in the Book of Discipline has been brought into operation. Knox always visualised the educational scheme as part of the Christian religion ; it is ironical that it should be first adopted in the country most antagonistic to Christianity.

The Parliament of January 1561, which considered the Book of Discipline, objected to it on

several grounds. First there was the question of transferring the possessions of the Catholic Church to the Kirk, and the nobles who had enriched themselves at the expense of the Church were naturally opposed to the project. But equally important was the attitude of many of the nobles towards the Kirk. They had fought on the side of the Congregation less from religious enthusiasm than to free Scotland from the French, and, now that Scotland seemed to be free, these nobles wanted the Kirk to content itself with a minor part in national life. Knox's plan would have given the control of the country into the hands of the Kirk, and that Kirk was one founded on democratic principles. The nobles had come to detest the Catholic Church, but at least their importance had been recognised under its sway. To Knox, however, every man was equal before God, and in the organisation of God's Kirk every man must have an equal voice. Lords who had been accustomed to tyrannise over the common people could not be expected to accept an organisation which put them on the same level as the commoners. Moreover, the administration of the Kirk as defined by Knox permitted an inquisition into the private life of everyone, and the aristocrats resented a system which would expose them to penalties on the accusations of spies.

The Book of Discipline was, however, favoured

by many members who attended the Parliament, and it was not rejected. The matter was put back for later consideration, but when Parliament met in May the ministers thought it politic to confine themselves for the time being to a request that provision should immediately be made for payment of the ministers, and a demand that the laws passed against the papists should be strictly carried out. Parliament promised to crush the last of Catholicism, but no satisfactory arrangement was reached regarding the remuneration of the servants of the Kirk.

Knox at this time had private troubles. His health was causing anxiety, and he had recently lost his wife, Marjory. But neither illness nor bereavement could be allowed to interfere with the work of establishing the Reformation. Protestantism again appeared to be in danger, for Mary Stuart had refused her assent to the laws which abolished popery and declared Protestantism to be the religion of Scotland. She was also reported to be gathering an army to descend upon the country, and Knox knew that victory for Mary would mean persecution for the Reformers and the return of Catholicism. Actually some of the Catholic nobles in Scotland had proposed a scheme to Mary for the invasion of Scotland, but nothing came of it.

So long as her husband was alive and she reigned as Queen of France, Mary showed little

inclination to come to Scotland. But the death of Francis, in December 1560, removed her from the French throne, and she turned to her native country. Opinions were divided among the Protestants regarding the result to be expected if she occupied the throne of Scotland. Some felt that she would try to reintroduce "idolatry," but others believed that her coming would strengthen the Reformation. The latter argued that Mary would be forced to depend upon the Protestants as the stronger party, and her co-operation with the Protestants, however unwillingly given, would establish the Reformation on a more regular basis.

There had been plans for excluding her from the throne, but for various reasons, these failed dismally, and in February 1561 it was decided to invite her to occupy the throne. Her natural brother, Lord James Stewart, was sent to Paris to confer with her. Knox had wanted Lord James to insist upon an undertaking that she would abjure Catholicism, but Lord James had bluntly refused to do so. He agreed, however, that Mary must not interfere with the reformed religion, and must choose her advisers from among the men who were then in authority.

Mary professed to accept the advice, and on the 19th of August she landed at Leith with a small French retinue. She was nineteen, famed for her beauty, and well aware of its influence ; brought

up in the French Court, which was sworn to protect Catholicism, she was as ardent a Catholic as her flighty nature would permit, and to a woman of her type, loving gaiety and colour, inclined to licentiousness, the drab, repressive doctrines of the Kirk of Scotland were completely abhorrent. She came resolved to crush Protestantism, and to humble the nobles who had dared to rise against her mother, and had treated herself with what she considered a lack of respect. Mary Queen of Scots had mighty ideas of the rights of a sovereign, and she meant to teach this rebellious people a bitter lesson.

She had a mixed reception. The Catholics – and the Catholics in Scotland were still numerous – were warm in their welcome, and some of the Protestants received her with loyal cheers, but many watched her arrival with fear and foreboding. To the queen, it was a sad return to her native country. She had left it in infancy, and she had neither knowledge of, nor sympathy with, the dour Scots character. After being in the French Court for many years – the most civilised and cultured Court in Europe – she was bound to be shocked by the uncouthness of her northern subjects. But Mary hid her feelings most successfully. She was playing not only for Scotland, but for the throne of England, and she had bright hopes that, if she could not depose Elizabeth, she would at least succeed that sovereign.

Knox was predisposed to despise the daughter of his former enemy, Mary of Guise, and, apart from that relationship, he had not changed his views about the wrong that was done when a woman occupied the throne. The Earl of Arran, who had unsuccessfully sued for the hand of Elizabeth of England, had been encouraged by Knox to present himself as a suitor to Mary within a month of the death of her husband, Francis, but the young widow had also rejected him. A marriage with the Protestant Arran would have been a bulwark against Catholicism in Knox's opinion, and he was disappointed that Mary had refused even to consider the match. For the present, however, Knox was prepared to adopt an attitude to neutrality until Mary had declared herself.

It was not long before a clash occurred. On the first Sunday after she arrived in Scotland, Mary attended mass in Holyrood, which had been made ready for occupation by her. There were murmurings among the population of Edinburgh, but Lord James Stewart, standing at the door of the chapel with his drawn sword, swore to protect his sister by force. Lord James, however, might strike fear into the hearts of the mob, but he could not stop the voice of Knox. On the following Sunday, from the pulpit of St. Giles, Knox launched a denunciation of popish practices, and declared that "one mass was more fearful to him than if ten thousand armed enemies

were landed in any part of the realm, on purpose to suppress the whole religion.”

From now on it was war between Knox and the queen. The single mass, Knox felt, had shown her to be an enemy who should be crushed without mercy, while Mary, for her part, was incensed against the man who ventured to preach against her in her own capital. She had heard much of Knox ; she knew him as the author of the notorious *First Blast* and as the harshest critic of her mother. In Paris she had declared that she would punish the ranter, and though she had been warned that Knox was a force in Scotland, and that she would be well advised to proceed warily, Mary had light-heartedly swept the warning aside. Once in Edinburgh, however, she received a disagreeable shock. She had been told that Knox was a power, but not until she was on the spot did she realise how great was his influence on the people, and how important was his leadership among the Protestants. Probably on the advice of Lord James Stewart, Mary determined to adopt a different policy. Within two weeks of her arrival she invited Knox to pay her a visit, and the two met in the first of those famous dialectical contests.

CHAPTER VIII

1561-1563

Knox's audiences with the queen – the greed of the nobles – starving the Kirk – assaults on the Catholics – Mary appeals to Knox – Parliament summoned – Mary refuses to recognise the laws – the desertion of the Lords – Knox's protests to Parliament – the quarrel with Lord James Stewart.

THE only accounts of the contests are those penned by Knox in his *History of the Reformation*, a work on which he was engaged at the time; but, while he is not an unbiased historian, there is no reason to doubt his accuracy on this occasion. The queen was accompanied only by Lord James Stewart when she gave Knox audience in Holyrood. It must have been irritating to her that she should have to make overtures to this man whom she detested, but, having made up her mind to the necessity, Mary had apparently no suspicion that she would be unable to cajole him into doing her will. Were not the Scotch nobles being won round to her side, and could Knox, a mere commoner, be proof against her striking beauty and her great charm? He was fifty-five, but old as well as young had been captured by her spells, and in the pride of her youth she seemed to believe that it was impossible for anyone to resist her blandishments.

Mary brought forward various charges against him – he had shown himself rebellious to the sovereign, had written treasonably against woman rulers, was known as a lawbreaker during his stay in England, and was accused of practising magic. Knox replied at considerable length. He was, he said, guilty of sedition, if to call a people to the worship of God were seditious, but he could not admit that such teaching was seditious. On the contrary, he maintained that by teaching the people to be devout followers of God he was making them better subjects of their princes. As for the *First Blast*, he was willing to answer any criticism of it that she might produce, but he had not seen any. She was, he added, Queen of Scotland, and, if Scotland was satisfied, he was satisfied to take no steps in the matter. She had accused him of causing disturbances in England, but his record in Berwick and Newcastle, where he had restored order, was the best answer to so foolish a charge. And magic – Knox hardly thought it worth while to notice a statement of that kind.

The exchanges are interesting. Knox quoted texts with his usual amazing facility, but he twisted them for his own purpose, and Mary, although she could not vie with him in quotation, was shrewd in pricking some of his contentions. God, she said, commanded subjects to obey their princes, yet Knox taught them to rebel. Religion

was of God, Knox replied, and subjects must not accept a religion, if it were untrue, "according to the appetites of their Princes." But, she exclaimed, did he really think that subjects had ever a right to resist their rulers by force? Knox declared that this was exactly what he did mean, for, if princes exceeded their powers, the people were justified in restraining them by any means, just as a son might restrain a father who went insane. On hearing this argument, Mary could say nothing for "more than a quarter of an hour," Knox writes; but, when she did resume the conversation, she commented that her subjects were apparently to obey him and not their queen. Knox repudiated that view: his duty, he retorted calmly, was to see that rulers and subjects both obeyed God. Mary said pettishly that she would defend the Roman Church, which she thought to be the true Church, drawing from Knox the remark that her will was not a reason, "neither doth your thought make that Roman harlot to be the true and immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ." The queen replied that she would follow her conscience, and Knox pointed out that conscience "requires knowledge, and I fear that right knowledge you have none." Then came the queen's point that the Scriptures were interpreted differently, and who was to be the judge of what she should believe. To Knox that was no difficulty. God spoke plainly through the

Bible, he said severely, and she should believe neither more nor less than she could find there. If there was any obscurity in one place, it was explained in another.

The queen had defended herself cleverly, and she had proved herself to be an acute contestant. But Knox had certainly won the battle, and Mary was aggrieved. She had a good brain, and was proud of her intellectual abilities, but she had broken against Knox's rock-like faith and his ready tongue. Disappointed as she was to be defeated in argument, however, she was still more upset that Knox should have been so little affected by her charm and beauty and rank. He had ignored all three. As a woman she felt insulted, as a politician she knew herself to be overreached.

But the beauty which had failed to win Knox was capturing the Scots nobility. Maitland and Lethington, who had played so notable a part in negotiating with Elizabeth of England, had become Mary's Secretary of State, and he was followed in the queen's service by several of the nobles who had been most vociferous in their support of the Reformation. Knox was learning, what he had suspected more than once, that the nobles had used the Reformation as means to rid the country of the French, and that as that task was now accomplished, they were inclined to be contemptuous of the claims of the

new religion. They opposed the Book of Discipline, and some of them even denied that the Kirk had a right to hold the half-yearly General Assemblies which had been instituted since the Reformation. The question of transferring the property of the Roman Catholic Church to the Kirk had been pushed into the background, and, when Knox and others insisted upon a settlement, the Privy Council ruled that two-thirds of the revenues should be allotted to the Catholic priests who had been turned out of office, and the other third divided between the ministers and the State. "My judgment fails me," commented Knox, when he was told of this arrangement. "I see two parts freely given to the devil, and the third must be divided between God and the devil. . . . Oh, happy servants of the devil, and miserable servants of Jesus Christ, if after this life there were not hell and heaven ! "

Knox continued to preach in Edinburgh against the wrongs done to the Kirk and the infidelity of the lords to God's cause, and made several preaching tours in different parts of the country to exhort the huge congregations to cling to their faith ; but, while he found that the people supported him, he could not influence the nobles, to whose hands the administration of Scotland had now been entrusted. Mary had schemed cleverly to increase her power among the nobles, and she enjoyed the embarrassments

of the Kirk. She could not, however, see any chance of reintroducing Catholicism in the present state of feeling. More than once the populace had given proof of its hatred of popery since her arrival. Priests had been burned in effigy, and at a mass attended by herself a mob had rushed into the church and assailed the clergy.

Nor could she find an opportunity to rid herself of the pestilent Knox. In May 1562 he had attacked the vices of princes from his pulpit, and had especially criticised the dancing which the queen allowed in Holyrood on one occasion, for in his view it was in celebration of a massacre of French Protestants. Mary summoned him for a second audience, and received him this time in the company of her maids of honour and some of her council. Mary, Knox says, made a speech, but he gives no report of it. His reply was that he had said nothing to which she could take objection, and thereupon he delivered the sermon of the previous day in the audience chamber! Nor did he fail to point out that if she came to church, as she ought, she would not need to depend upon false accounts of what he had said. Mary did not attack the sermon. Instead, she tried once more to win him over, and appealed to him to come to her privately if he had complaints against her, promising to listen to his views. Knox, however, was not to be tempted into entertaining such a compact. If she came

to church, he returned, she would hear what he thought of her actions, or, if she preferred, he would summarise his sermons for her, but "to wait upon your chamber door or elsewhere, and then to have no farther liberty but to whisper my mind in your Grace's ear, or to tell you what others think and speak of you, neither will my conscience nor my vocation whereto God hath called me to suffer it." He was not "appointed to come to every man in particular to show him his offence," and he pointed out that he ought to be at his study and not hanging about the Court as he was. Mary, in a rage at this refusal of her offer, turned her back on him, and Knox withdrew cheerfully. Someone whispered that he was not afraid, and Knox, overhearing the words, remarked, "Why should the pleasing face of a gentlewoman frighten me? I have looked in the faces of many angry men, and yet have not been afraid above measure."

The queen had acquitted herself less well on this second occasion, but, while beaten in her contests with Knox, she could console herself with the reaction that was taking place against Protestantism. In the winter of 1562-3, mass had been celebrated in various parts of the country; the queen's mass had been pronounced legal under the laws of the realm, and surely it was not wrong for subjects to use the same service as their ruler. Knox roused himself to greater

efforts to stop the spread of Catholicism, and the General Assembly of the Kirk issued warnings against the practice. The Protestants in Ayrshire and elsewhere, alarmed at the open celebration of mass, declared that punishment would be visited on the priests, and it seemed that, although Protestantism was losing ground, a more ruthless drive against the papists would be instituted by the fanatical section of the population.

Mary, recognising Knox's authority over the Reformers, decided to ask him to restrain the persecutors. For that purpose she summoned him to Lochleven, where she was in residence, and for two hours, according to his report, she begged his co-operation. Knox replied that the Protestants were acting against those who celebrated mass ; that mass was contrary to the law ; and that if she herself carried out the law, there would be no need for the attacks upon the priests. Was it his view, she enquired, that the people should take over the duty that belonged to the State. " The sword of justice is God's," said Knox, and went on to elaborate the point that, if the ruler would not use the sword, the people were within their rights in doing so. Subjects, he explained, were bound to obey the queen, but she was no less bound to carry out the established laws. " You crave of them service : they crave of you protection and defence against wicked doers."

The queen could stand no more of this kind of

conversation, and abruptly brought the audience to a close. But she was warned of the importance of winning Knox over to her side, and next morning she sent for him again. This time she did not attempt to argue with him, but treated the preacher as a dear confidant and trusted ally. She sought his opinion of Lord Ruthven. Knox answered shortly that he could not discuss a man who was not there to speak up for himself. Then the queen advised him against a man who was being considered for high office in the Kirk, and Knox promised to look into his past life carefully. (The enquiry proved Mary to be right, and the aspirant was disbarred.) Mary went on to make a touching request to Knox. Would he try to smooth the quarrel between the Earl of Argyll and his wife – for my sake, the queen added prettily. Knox was softened, and promised to do his best. The interview ended with Mary's promise to follow his advice and execute justice on all who offended the laws. Knox returned that by so doing she would please God, and could not forbear to point out that peace and tranquillity would then reign throughout the realm, "which is more profitable to your majesty than all the pope's power can be."

Mary seemed to intend to keep her promise, for fifty people were summoned for practising Catholicism. Actually, however, the queen had no intention of taking strict measures against the

Catholics, and the prosecution was merely a blind. Parliament was due to meet at the end of May, and the queen wanted to create a good impression on the Protestants. She knew that she had a stiff fight in front of her. No Parliament had been summoned since her arrival in Scotland two years before, and she was resolved to prevent this meeting from accomplishing any real work. She refused to recognise the Treaty of Edinburgh of 1560, and claimed that the Acts passed by the Parliaments held since the death of Mary of Guise were not legal. Such a contention meant that Protestantism had no standing in Scotland, and that the laws against Catholicism could not be carried out. But, as a favour, the queen confirmed certain of the Acts.

Parliament mildly accepted the queen's ruling, but to Knox it was monstrous that the Kirk and the national assembly should be flouted. Mary might graciously give Protestantism her sanction, but that was not enough for him ; he declared that the Parliaments held since 1560 were legal, and that Scotland had no need to beg the queen's approval of its acts. He went to the members and protested against their desertion of the Reformers and their weakness in face of the idolatrous queen ; but he received no satisfaction. If, the members told him, they had insisted upon passing the Book of Discipline of the Kirk, had affirmed the legality of the Acts adopted by

previous Parliaments, and pushed through the other measures advocated by him, they would have caused trouble for no object. Plans were in the air for the queen's marriage, and Parliament could force her to agree to concessions as the price of its consent to the union. Knox felt that this policy was all wrong. He especially blamed Lord James Stewart, now created Earl of Moray. Moray was an old campaigner in the cause of the Reformation, and one of its most sincere friends. In a letter, Knox upbraided him bitterly for his conduct in betraying Protestantism, and he formally broke off relations with the greatest noble on the side of the new religion.

From the members of Parliament, Knox had obtained no redress by his private protests, but he hoped to arouse them to a sense of their responsibilities by a public appeal. In the pulpit of St. Giles he lashed out at the feebleness of the nobles. God's aid had brought them to power, but now they deserted Him. It was a cowardly betrayal, and His punishment would not fail if they did not mend their ways. "That dark and dolorous night wherein all you, my lords, with shame and fear left this town, is yet in my mind; and God forbid that ever I forget it." That night, on which they had fled from Edinburgh to Stirling, seemed, however, to be forgotten by the nobles in the pride of their present power, for they had sacrificed God's Kirk at the behest of

the queen. Let them ask of the queen "that which by God's word ye may justly require, and if she will not agree with you in God, you are not bound to agree with her in the Devil." That was offensive enough to Mary, but worse was to come. There was talk of Mary's marriage with Don Carlos of Spain, and Spain was the cradle of the most fanatical Catholics. Such a marriage would spell ruin for Scotland, Knox cried. "Note the day, and hear witness after," he warned them, "whensoever the nobility of Scotland, professing the Lord Jesus, consent that an infidel (and all Papists are infidels) shall be head to your sovereign, you do as far as in you lies to banish Christ Jesus from this realm ; you bring God's vengeance upon the country, a plague upon yourselves, and perchance you shall do small comfort to your sovereign."

The report of that sermon was carried to Mary, and she summoned him to answer for his criticism. Several friends accompanied him to Holyrood, but only Erskine of Dun was allowed to go with Knox into the audience chamber. As soon as she saw the minister, the queen burst out. She had borne with him and sought his friendship, she said, but now "I avow to God I shall be revenged." After that outburst, she broke into tears, but Knox was neither intimidated by the threat nor affected by the sobbing. He "did patiently abide," and then gave an answer that

must have increased her exasperation. "When it shall please God to deliver you from that bondage of darkness and error in which you have been nourished for the lack of true doctrine," he said, "your Majesty will find the liberty of my tongue nothing offensive." Mary had been hit upon the raw by his references to her marriage, and wanted to know what business it was of his. Knox explained that he was a minister, and that it was his duty to point out the failings of others. The nobles were so much swayed by her that he was bound to remind them of their responsibilities. Mary did not see that the responsibilities of the nobility had anything to do with the matter, and asked again how he dared to interfere. And, she sneered, "what are you within this Commonwealth?" "A subject born within the same," said Knox, "and albeit I neither be earl, lord, nor baron within it, yet has God made me (how abject ever I be in your eyes) a profitable member within the same." Another bout of weeping from the queen was followed by Knox's remark that he would rather bear her tears than "hurt my conscience, or betray my Commonwealth through my silence." Mary told him to withdraw and await her pleasure in an adjoining chamber, and for nearly an hour Knox remained in uncertainty of his fate. Mary would gladly have revenged herself on him, but, probably on the advice of her counsellors, she decided to take no action.

Knox left the palace in high spirits. He had not, he declares, enjoyed the sight of her tears, but he was more than satisfied with an interview in which he had withstood threats and blandishments. Mary sought no more interviews with the minister who had proved impervious to her wiles. When next John Knox faced the queen it was as her prisoner.

CHAPTER IX

1563-1571

Knox charged with illegal convocation – trial before Privy Council – forbidden to preach in Edinburgh – assassination of David Rizzio – Darnley and Bothwell – Mary forced to abdicate – James VI of Scotland – Moray appointed regent – Kirkcaldy of Grange – Knox's life threatened – transferred to St. Andrews.

MARY had sworn to make Knox pay, and at the end of 1563 she thought that she saw the chance of punishing this troublesome critic. During her absence from the capital, some of her servants went to her private chapel to celebrate mass. Mass was permitted to be celebrated within the realm only in the presence of the queen, and, although this mass was to be held in her chapel, it was nevertheless a breach of the agreement. A number of the Protestants interfered, and two of the demonstrators were summoned to account for their action in October.

Knox was minister of Edinburgh and felt himself responsible for the protection of the accused men. Mass, except in the presence of the queen, was illegal ; as the queen had not been there, it was understandable that the people should interfere, especially as they knew that they could expect no help from the law in punishing the Catholics. Knox had no faith in the fairness

of the trial which the accused would receive, and he seems to have feared that the queen intended to make the trial the beginning of a campaign against the Protestants. After consultation with other Protestants in Edinburgh, therefore, he issued a circular to the various congregations throughout the country appealing to them to come in force to Edinburgh for the protection of their accused brethren. A copy of this letter came into the hands of the Privy Council. They ruled that it was treasonable to convoke the queen's subjects, and Knox was ordered to appear for trial in December.

The queen herself was present at the proceedings, which were conducted before a great council. When she saw the preacher standing at the bar, she said with a laugh, according to Knox, that he "had made me weep, and had never wept himself. I will see if I can make him weep." Maitland of Lethington took the leading part in the prosecution. The charge of treason against Knox was stated at length, and then the queen intervened with the suggestion that he should be asked whether he admitted that the circular was his. Knox acknowledged the letter. "Well, well," the queen said impatiently, "read your own letter." Knox read out the letter, and the queen, who seemed determined to take over the prosecution herself, enquired whether the lords had ever heard "a more despiteful and treasonable letter."

Maitland demanded if Knox did not repent having written such a letter which convoked the queen's lieges, drawing from Knox the telling retort that if he were guilty now he had often been guilty in the past, since he had convoked the people on other occasions. Maitland had himself been closely associated with such convocations when the Congregation was fighting for its life against Mary of Guise, and could only murmur that times had changed and there was now no need of summons to the brethren. Knox disagreed, for to him the danger was as great as ever it had been. If convocations had been necessary before, as he assumed they would admit, they were just as necessary now that "the devil comes under the cloak of justice, to do that which God would not suffer him to do by strength." Mary was indignant that Knox should be permitted to make these points, and interrupted again. "Methinks you trifle with him," she said. "Who gave him authority to make convocation of my lieges? Is not that treason?" Ruthven tried to defend Knox, but the queen silenced him with the remark, "Hold your peace and let him make answer for himself." Knox then proceeded to explain that he had never convoked people except by the orders of the Kirk, and that he defended the right of the Kirk to convoke the Congregation as it had done since the early days of the Reformation. "You shall not escape so," the queen

threatened, and, giving up the issue of illegal convocation, charged him with accusing her of cruelty. Knox returned in a long speech that he did not accuse the queen, but that he spoke of the cruelty of the papists, and everyone knew of their excesses. Maitland held a whispered consultation with the queen, and announced that Knox could go home for the night.

The vote was taken in the absence of the queen, who was assured that the nobles would find Knox guilty. On the contrary, however, all except a few of the Court party voted for his acquittal. Maitland went for the queen, and, returning with her, demanded that a fresh vote should be taken before her. But the nobles were not to be moved by Maitland's anger or overawed by Mary's presence. Once again the verdict was in Knox's favour.

The queen was so upset at the escape of Knox that some of the nobles who had voted for his acquittal thought that it would be politic for him to appease her by a voluntary confession of repentance. Knox steadfastly refused ; not only did he feel himself innocent, but the selfsame nobles who now beseeched him had voted for his acquittal, and, if he expressed his sorrow, he would be condemning their verdict. The only verdict he really cared about, however, was that of the Kirk, and at the end of the year he submitted a statement of his case to the General

Assembly. By an overwhelming majority it approved his conduct, and confirmed that he had acted within the authority granted to him by the Kirk. This was a further cause of grievance with the queen, and in March 1564 Knox again drew forth her wrath by contracting a marriage with Margaret Stewart, a girl of sixteen. The queen's objection was not on account of the age of the bride – Knox was now in his sixtieth year – but because Margaret Stewart was related to the royal house, and Mary could not bear that the detested Knox should be a relative, however distant.

Knox made several tours in the country during 1564, and was alarmed at the tepidness which was shown in some parts to the reformed religion. His personal influence was, however, still as great as ever in Edinburgh. It had need to be, for Mary was waiting for a chance to pounce upon him. She felt more sure of her power, and planned to bring back the exiled Catholic priests and abolish Protestantism. In the spring of 1564 had come her surprising marriage with her cousin, Lord Darnley, recently arrived from France. Darnley attended mass, but he also sometimes appeared at the Kirk, and he was present at St. Giles when Knox made reference to idolatrous women whose husbands could not keep them in order. Darnley regarded the remarks as an insult to himself and the queen, and Knox was summoned before the council and forbidden

to speak while their majesties were in residence. He replied that he acknowledged only the authority of the General Assembly of the Kirk, and that only "so far as the word of God" would permit him to acknowledge it. The Protestants of Edinburgh rallied to his support, and Knox was not out of the pulpit for long.

But it was a proof that Mary had not forgiven him, and that she had now the power to sway the council as she would. Moray and several other Protestant lords had risen against her after her marriage to Darnley, but the queen had been triumphant in the struggle, and the rebels had been forced to flee to England. Mary now ruled with the Italian David Rizzio as her principal adviser, and had got rid of most of the Protestant lords who had shared in the government. Rizzio supported the queen's scheme for the re-establishment of Catholicism, and the policy of the administration was to embarrass the Protestant ministers as much as possible. Their salaries were unpaid, their rights challenged, and their protests tossed aside unread.

Darnley, however, was jealous of Rizzio, the nobles were incensed against the foreigner for his power and arrogance, and a compact was reached between Darnley and a number of the Protestant lords to assassinate the queen's favourite. The assassination took place on the 9th of March, 1566, and Knox, although he had no direct part

in it, thoroughly approved of the removal of the man who had threatened the Reformation. The Protestant conspirators, however, did not obtain their ends by the murder of Rizzio, for Darnley, who had agreed to keep the queen in captivity, made his peace with her. Knox was sent by the Assembly of the Kirk on a preaching tour to the north, where he would be less under Mary's eyes. He returned at the end of the year, but not long afterwards set out on a visit to England, of which practically nothing is known.

He was back in the capital for the meeting of the Assembly of the Kirk in June 1567. Much had happened since the assassination of Rizzio. Mary had never forgiven her husband, Darnley, for the murder of her favourite, and she had a new lover in the Earl of Bothwell. In February, Darnley had been murdered, and there is little doubt that Mary was aware of the plot. Two months later she married Bothwell. But this was too much for Scotland. The nation rose against the queen and her third husband, and, in the middle of June, Mary was imprisoned in Lochleven Castle.

The meeting of the Assembly of the Kirk was the first opportunity to test the feeling in regard to the fate of the imprisoned queen. Elizabeth of England, who had no love for Mary, but thought it intolerable that subjects should presume to try their sovereign, instructed her ambassador

to stop the proceedings, but Knox was now the most powerful man in Scotland and he would permit no interference. The Kirk, however, adjourned for a few weeks without reaching a decision. Knox had no doubt of the proper course to pursue. He wanted Mary to be brought to trial. Was she not a murderer and an adulterer? If found guilty, Knox repeated again and again from his pulpit, she should be put to death.

The queen still had powerful supporters, and Knox's view was not accepted. Mary was compelled to agree to abdicate, and her infant son – born June 1566 – was crowned King of Scotland at Stirling (James VI), while Moray was appointed regent. Knox was not entirely satisfied, but he realised that, though justice would not be executed upon the erring queen, the reformed religion could be made secure. Parliament met in December 1567, and Knox was chosen to preach to the members before it began its deliberations. Let them put the affairs of the Kirk in order, he appealed, for, if they attended first to God's work, their other labours could not fail to be blessed. Parliament confirmed the laws against the papists, and declared Protestantism to be the religion of Scotland. Provision was made for the proper payment of the ministers of the Kirk – a reform for which Knox had agitated for years. At the end of the year 1567

feel that the danger of the re-establishment of Catholicism had been removed.

But Mary's supporters continued to plot. In May of the following year (1568), they were able to effect her escape from Lochleven Castle, and an army enrolled under her banner. The news of the escape caused something like a panic among the Protestants, and Knox solemnly warned his congregation that the troubles which would fall upon the country must be ascribed to those weaklings who had refused to bring her to trial. The regent, Moray, natural brother of Mary, energetically prepared to face her on the field, and at the battle of Langside her forces were dispersed. Mary herself fled to England, where, after proving an acute embarrassment to Elizabeth for a number of years, she was executed for treasonable practices.

A period of reconstruction now began in Scotland under Moray. The adherents of the exiled Mary still held Edinburgh Castle, but no widespread rising occurred, and it seemed that the country might at last have peace after so many years of war and disorder. In January 1570, however, Moray was shot dead at Linlithgow by Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh. He was a follower of Mary, but had also personal grievances against the regent. Knox felt the tragedy of Moray severely. For years he had been a close

had quarrelled, and he had great confidence in Moray's sincerity as well as his capabilities. The assassin, moreover, had been under arrest on a previous occasion, and had been released only on Knox's intervention. From his pulpit, Knox bemoaned the sad times in store for Scotland now that Moray was no more. The people, he said, had not appreciated the regent, and so he had been withdrawn from them. As he spoke of the "goodly and godly governor," a congregation of three thousand persons was moved to tears.

Knox was now sixty-five. Since his imprisonment in the galleys, his health had never been good, and to his constant illness was now added the weakness of advancing years. In the month of Moray's assassination, he had written that he had "one foot in the grave," and expressed the opinion that his death was imminent. In October of the same year (1570) he had an apoplectic seizure. Reports were spread that he was on the point of death, but the stroke did not prove fatal. It affected, however, the free movement of his legs, and he was able to speak only with difficulty. But Knox insisted that he should continue his functions as minister of St. Giles, Edinburgh.

In July 1571 the Kirk intervened on his behalf. The charge of Edinburgh was a strenuous one, not at all suitable for a stricken man, but that was not the principal reason why the Kirk

action. Edinburgh Castle was still in the hands of Mary's adherents and was commanded by Kirkcaldy of Grange, one of the outstanding leaders of the Congregation in its early days and a stalwart in the fight for the Reformation, but now won over to the queen. Knox and Grange had quarrelled, for the latter, apart from adopting the queen's cause, had pursued tactics which Knox could not forgive. A servant of Grange's retinue had been imprisoned in Tolbooth, and, regarding the imprisonment as unjust, Grange had attacked the prison and released his follower. Knox declaimed from the pulpit that it was scandalous that Grange should take upon himself to interfere with the due process of the law, and then began a contest in which both participants indulged in the most unrestrained language. Knox might have been in actual danger had not the anti-queen party in Ayrshire warned Grange, in a letter, that any attack on Knox would be visited with their instant retribution. Grange did not dare to ignore the threat.

The new regent, Lennox, could not maintain peace in Scotland. The queen's followers continued to grow in power, and parts of the country refused to acknowledge the regent. Clashes between the adherents of the exiled queen and of the regent were of frequent occurrence, and Scotland seemed on the verge of a bitter civil war. Edinburgh was the centre of the struggle

and Knox, as the leading figure in the anti-queen party, was cordially hated. A shot was fired into his house, and, had Knox been sitting in his usual place, it would probably have struck him. Kirkcaldy of Grange advised the Kirk to remove Knox to another place, since he was in danger in Edinburgh. Grange may have feared that, if harm came to Knox, the blame would be laid upon him. The Kirk agreed that Knox must be protected, and transferred him from the capital to St. Andrews.

Knox made no protest. He was weary with the struggle, in deep dejection at the state of his beloved country, and he craved for rest. He had turned to Geneva, and had thought of spending the remainder of his life in that city where he had been the friend of Calvin and in which he had spent his two most happy years. But it was not to be, and he retired to seek peace in St. Andrews. His battle, however, was not over. Once more he was to launch from St. Giles a sermon that rang through the nation.

CHAPTER X

1571-1572

Dissensions at St. Andrews – growth of Mary's party – Morton and the archbishops – robbing the Kirk – Knox invited to Edinburgh – massacre of St. Bartholomew – du Croc – death of Knox.

KNOX was free from danger in St. Andrews, but that town did not afford the peace and rest which he needed. Like every other place in Scotland at this time, St. Andrews was divided into queen and anti-queen parties, and Knox was hailed by the latter as a great acquisition. The days when he could preach three sermons in a week and carry on an enormous correspondnece as well as guide his congregation had gone for ever. In his present state of health it was as much as he could do to preach once on Sundays, and he had to be helped up to the pulpit by his secretary, "good, godly Richard Bannatyne." But though physically broken he still retained his mental powers and his mastery over audiences. The vigour of his attacks on those who defied the regent aroused loud protest, and Knox was summoned to answer for his conduct before the authorities of St. Andrews University.

He entered a defence, and triumphantly justified

himself, but at the same time he challenged the right of the university to intervene in matters that appertained to the Kirk. In a letter to the General Assembly he warned the ministers of the need to preserve the liberty of the pulpit, and advised them carefully to guard against the encroachment of the universities. The preacher of God's gospel must have absolute freedom to speak his mind, and the only authority on earth with dominion over the ministers was the General Assembly of the Kirk.

There were other questions which engaged his attention. He wanted England to surrender Mary. In his opinion she was a danger, and her guilt, of which he had no doubt, warranted her execution. He was also engaged in a dispute over the constitution and endowment of the Kirk. The revenues from the benefices of the Catholic Church were, Knox had always maintained, the property of the Kirk and must be used for the good of the people. But the nobles disagreed utterly with that view. The Earl of Morton, soon to become regent, would have liked to annex the benefices, but he knew that a great outcry would be raised if the revenues were diverted to other than religious purposes. Morton therefore proposed a different plan. At an assembly of ministers, held at Leith, it was suggested at his instigation that archbishoprics should be re-instituted in Scotland. The motion was

approved, and Morton, on whom the nomination of the archbishop of St. Andrews had been conferred, took steps to instal a minister who was willing to be his tool. The minister was to have the honour of the position, but the larger part of the revenues was to go into Morton's pockets. Knox was asked to conduct the inauguration ceremony, but he refused to do so and preached violently against the appointment of the archbishop. He had no objection to the nominee, a man who had done good service in the Protestant cause. Knox, however, objected to the diversion of money which he looked upon as the property of the Kirk, and was also afraid that, if archbishops were appointed in the Reformed Kirk, the Roman Catholic system of an ecclesiastical hierarchy would develop. The Protestant archbishops were to be severely restricted in their powers, but even so Knox looked upon them as a danger. His ideal was a Kirk ruled by the members of the congregation, and, apart from other considerations, he was against appointments in which ordinary members of the Kirk had no voice.

In his sermons Knox had other criticisms to make of the way which the Kirk was taking. The bad old system of giving ecclesiastical office to men who would not, or could not, reside in their parishes was becoming more common ; ministers with qualifications which he regarded as insufficient were being appointed, and some men

held more than one living. His protests did not altogether pass unheeded, but he was unsuccessful in stopping the appointment of the new archbishop of St. Andrews, and the town became distasteful to him. He pined for Edinburgh, the scene of his greatest triumphs, and in August 1572 the opportunity came to return to the capital. A truce had been arranged between the regent and the queen's party, and Knox's congregation of St. Giles, many of whom had been exiled from Edinburgh but were permitted to come back under the truce, invited him to resume his duties as their minister. Knox was willing to accept, but he made one condition – he must be free to speak his mind, and he asked the congregation carefully to consider whether they were prepared to face the difficulties which might arise with the authorities when he exercised that liberty.

The congregation hastened to assure him on that point, and Knox started out for the capital. He was a dying man, and he knew it. The journey was covered by easy stages, but nevertheless he was exhausted when he reached Edinburgh from St. Andrews. By the last Sunday of the month he was sufficiently recovered to preach in St. Giles. The massacre of St. Bartholomew had taken place a few days before (August 24th), and the news of the shambles roused Knox to a mighty denunciation of Catholicism. Du Croc,

the French ambassador, was in the audience at St. Giles, and Knox sent a message by him to the French king : du Croc was to accuse the king as a murderer, and tell him that God's vengeance would speedily fall. Du Croc protested, but was coldly informed by the nobles that they were unable to stop the mouths of the ministers, and that no action could be taken against Knox. The report of the sermon spread through Scotland. Knox had expressed the feeling of the people, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew strengthened the nation's opposition to Catholicism.

It was Knox's last great performance. His voice was failing, and he could not be heard by more than half of the congregation which gathered to listen to him in St. Giles. He was unable to perform the ordinary work of the parish, and at his suggestion another minister was appointed. He himself preached, when he was able, in a smaller place of worship (Tolbooth) until November. In the middle of that month he had a second apoplectic stroke, and from it there was no recovery. On the 16th of November, feeling that the end was near, he said his farewell to the representatives of the Kirk which he more than any other man had created, and for which he had fought so tenaciously. Knox lingered on for eight more days, and died on the evening of the 24th of November. The great nobles of Scotland

had come to see him before his death, and they formed part of the huge gathering which attended his burial in the churchyard of St. Giles.

John Knox had few graces. He was blunt and downright, often coarse in his speech, a man who knew no tolerance, and who pursued his enemies with a bitter hatred. He was not always consistent, and on one occasion at least he did not hesitate to propose a scandalous expedient to obtain his ends. He approved the murder of Rizzio and of others, and would have subjected the Catholics in Scotland to a persecution as great as that borne by the Protestants in England under Mary Tudor. But, with all his faults, Knox was the leader who guided his nation to freedom. "What I have been to my country, albeit this unthankful age will not know, yet the ages to come will be compelled to bear witness to the truth," he wrote, and for three centuries he was honoured as the hero of the Reformation in Scotland. Within the last fifty years, however, there has been a tendency to decry his work. Andrew Lang did not start the movement, but he was more clever than earlier critics, and he led the way for a school of biographers who have delighted in making Knox the target for their shafts.

Knox is violently attacked for his conduct towards Mary Queen of Scots, and is represented as a boor who abused his sovereign shamefully. From some criticisms of his attitude to Mary, one is

tempted to think that the critics have forgotten the position which Knox held and the stakes for which he played. He felt himself to be the spokesman of the nation as well as of God, and he was dealing with a woman who had sworn to destroy his religion – and, incidentally, to punish himself. Mary cast her spell over most of the other leaders of the Congregation, and it was well for Scotland that one man recognised her for what she was – a dangerous and unscrupulous intriguer who would have crushed Protestantism and sold Scotland into bondage.

To her, as to all enemies of the Reformation, Knox was a terrible foe ; but, he protested on his deathbed, he had not hated anyone personally ; it was only their errors that he hated. The power that became his after the triumph of the Congregation was never used for his own purposes. He took nothing for himself ; he spared those who had injured him, and, though he had ample opportunities to enrich himself, he lived and died a poor man. He fought to secure freedom of worship for the reformed religion, and, when that had been won, he was no less courageous in his struggle against the Lords of the Congregation to secure justice for the poor. He freed his country from the stranglehold of Catholicism and the domination of France, and he awakened the conscience of the nation to the rights of the down-trodden.

Scotland has had no greater leader than this man of the people who battled so valiantly for the people. The regent, Morton, at the burial of Knox, used words which have often been repeated — “There lies he, who never feared the face of man.” To Scotland he left a heritage of fearless independence which still survives after three centuries and a half.

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